No. 62 NOV. 15, 1913 5 CENTS

Nick Carter Stories

UNDER COVER

or Nick Carter's Right-Hand Man

NICK CARTER STORIES

Issued Weekly. Entered as Second-class Matter at the New York Post Office, by STREET & SMITH, *79-89 Seventh Ave., New York.*

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Single Copies or Back Numbers, 5c. Each.

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No. 62. NEW YORK, November 15, 1913. **Price Five Cents.**

UNDER COVER;

Or, NICK CARTER'S RIGHT-HAND MAN.

Edited by CHICKERING CARTER.

CHAPTER I.

A NIGHT CALL.

"Now, Danny, get away lively and let her go at top speed."

"Trust me for that, Mr. Carter."

"We should cover the distane in a quarter hour."

"In less time, sir, barring a slip."

Nick Carter's fast touring car, containing the famous detective and his chief assistant, Chick Carter, and driven by his reliable young chauffeur, swerved from in front of his residence and was speeding up Madison Avenue before the last was fairly said.

It was two o'clock in the morning, on the night of October twelfth.

Nick had been aroused ten minutes before by an urgent telephone call, informing him of a terrible crime that had just been committed in Riverdale, and asking him to hasten immediately to the scene of the tragedy.

Nick had one special reason for complying with the request, in that it came from a very prominent man, whose friendship he highly valued, and whom he already had done a very great service—the Honorable Cyrus Langham, the multimillionaire president of the Federal Railway corporation, which Nick had literally saved from financial disaster several months before, by thwarting and exposing the crooked work of a powerful pool of stock-market speculators, all of whom had been financially ruined by the failure of their desperate game for millions.

"Is Langham in wrong again?" Chick questioned, when Nick settled back in the tonneau. "What did he phone?"

During the preparations for their hurried departure, for both detectives were abed when the phone call came, Nick had had no time to state the nature of the case. He now replied gravely:

"Langham did not telephone. The communication came from a man into whose house he had been taken."

"Taken?" echoed Chick inquiringly. "Is he injured?"

"Yes."

"Seriously?"

"Not very. He was returning home from the big reception tendered the English ambassador and his family by Governor Polk. It was held in Polk's magnificent suburban place, Westview, several miles up the Hudson."

"I've read about it in the papers," Chick nodded. "Who hasn't? It's one of the swell affairs of the season. But how was Langham injured?"

"His limousine was held up by a gang of auto bandits."

"The devil you say!" Chick exclaimed. "The Lon Leary gang again?"

"That's an open question, though an affirmative answer would probably be correct," Nick replied. "The chauffeur was shot and killed. Langham was knocked insensible. His daughter is missing, and is supposed to have been abducted."

"Great Scott! Have these rascals begun stealing women, also? That's a new move for them to make. What more?"

"A wealthy lady who was with them, Miss Follett, of Philadelphia, fainted when the attack was made, and she did not revive until after the bandits had fled. Both women wore diamonds worth thousands, and Langham had several hundred dollars and jewelry of considerable value on his person. The crooks got away with the whole outfit—and with Lora Langham, also, it appears."

"Did you learn anything more?"

"No. That was all I waited to learn. We shall presently get other particulars."

"By Jove! that gang must be rounded up, Nick," Chick declared, grimly shaking his head. "It's becoming more and more serious. The chauffeur killed, eh? He's the fifth man killed by these rascals, to say nothing of a dozen shot, or badly injured. All of these crimes must have been committed by the same gang."

"Undoubtedly."

"Led by Lon Leary, whom we supposed went down and out when Joe Rocket killed himself. If Nate Herrick's chauffeur wasn't the leader of the gang, why the dickens did he take poison when you cornered him in Herrick's library three months ago? He could have taken the chance of a trial, at least, for the killing of Vincent, instead of swallowing cyanide and——"

"I'm not so sure, Chick, that he did so intentionally."

"Intentionally?"

"Exactly. The more I think of that case, Chick—and I've been thinking of it quite seriously of late—the more sure I feel that we—— Well, I'll defer telling you what I think," Nick broke off abruptly.

"Why defer it?"

"Because our time is limited. We shall be upon the scene of this affair in a very few minutes. Leave the other until later. It will keep."

Chick Carter made no reply.

Nick had leaned forward in the tonneau and was gazing ahead over the broad thoroughfare, over which they were speeding at a sixty-mile clip, with Danny crouching as stoically as a bronze image over the driver's wheel.

It was bright moonlight, with a myriad of stars in the purple sky—the very last night one would think crooks would have selected for a desperate holdup in a public highway.

That they were not ordinary desperadoes, however, appeared in the terrible record to which Chick had referred—a score of robberies and murders so amazedly bold, sanguinary, and brutal that the police were staggered and the community terrorized by the stupefying audacity of their frightful work.

It had begun with numerous house robberies several months before, chiefly the holding up of gatherings of wealthy people, private receptions, weddings, dances, or the like, when large quantities of costly jewelry could be secured—as had occurred in the house of Senator Ellery, on Washington Heights, the only case in which Nick Carter had figured, recovering the plunder, and having reason to believe at the time that he had run down the leader of the gang, the suicide to whom Chick had referred.

Within the following month, however, the work of manifestly the same gang became of a much more daring and desperate character. It began with the killing and robbery of a bank messenger in Broad Street one morning, with the shooting of a policeman and wounding of several men who tried to prevent the escape of the bandits in a high-power touring car which they were using.

Next came the looting of an uptown broker's office during business hours, in which twenty men were held up under half a dozen revolvers, the safe ravaged, the cash drawers robbed, and doors locked by the miscreants before departing—all accomplished in less than ten minutes by five men, obviously disguised, against odds of four to one, all of whom arrived and escaped as before in a car driven by a waiting confederate.

Following this exploit came the burglary of a suburban post office, the killing of a janitor, and the same sensational escape of the gang with several thousand dollars' worth of booty.

Then ensued in rapid succession a burglary in Fordham, a robbery in New Rochelle, the sacking of a jewelry store in Brooklyn, during which a police sergeant was fatally wounded, several robberies in other near towns and in the city itself, with repeated thefts of expensive high-power automobiles from various quarters—all sensationally accomplished in utter defiance of opposition, and without leaving a clew by which the police were able to identify, trace, and arrest the marauders.

Only a printed card found on the floor of one of the first dwellings robbed by this gang had supplied a single hint at the identity of one of their number, a card bearing merely the name, Alonzo Leary, and which had occasioned the name since given to the desperadoes—the Lon Leary gang of auto bandits, soon far more terribly notorious than at first was anticipated.

That the holdup and robbery of Cyrus Langham, the few particulars of which had just been reported to Nick Carter, was the work of this same gang of bandits, the detectives had not a doubt.

It was nearly half past two when Nick and his two companions approached the immediate scene of the crime.

The glaring lamps of a large limousine on one side of the road, a group of men gathered near it, others farther removed and the lighted windows of a residence some fifty yards beyond them, the only dwelling in that immediate locality, a fact which evidently had led the bandits to select that point for their desperate work—such was the scene that met the gaze of the approaching detectives.

Many other cars had been passed during their speedy run, nearly all of them homeward bound from the fashionable reception. Three policemen then standing in the road had compelled them to move on, instead of lingering at the scene of the holdup.

One of the officers, whom Nick immediately recognized, hastened to speak to him when Danny brought their car to a stop.

CHAPTER II.

NICK TAKES A HAND.

"I've been waiting for you, Mr. Carter, knowing that you had been sent for," said the policeman, respectfully touching his cap.

"I came as quickly as possible, Nolan," Nick replied, stepping out of the car. "What have you learned?"

"Very little, sir. It's the same old story."

"I inferred so."

"These auto rascals are getting in their work right and left."

"What have you done?"

"All that I could to preserve any evidence that might be here," said Nolan, glancing around. "I have prevented cars from waiting here, and also kept these people away from the spot where the limousine was held up."

"Very good!"

"I'm afraid, sir, nevertheless, that you will find nothing in the way of footprints, or tire tracks, so many cars have passed home from the Polk reception. These knaves certainly took long chances in doing such a job when another car might have shown up at any moment."

"It's more strange to me, Nolan, that they did not wait and hold up others," Nick replied. "I may, however, hit upon the reason for it."

"Here is a kid glove that was found under Marvin, when we removed his body to the side of the road."

"Marvin is the chauffeur?"

"Yes, Mr. Langham's chauffeur," Nolan nodded. "He was shot through the head and instantly killed. There is

the body, sir, with Hadley watching it. We have notified the coroner."

Nick glanced at the motionless form lying on one side of the broad highway, with a policeman standing over it, and a group of morbidly curious people gathered near by. He took the kid glove which Nolan tendered and merely glanced at it, noting the size, and that it was somewhat soiled, and he then thrust it into his pocket.

"It must belong to one of the gang, or it would not have been found underneath Marvin when we raised him," Nolan remarked. "I've learned that it did not belong to him, nor to Mr. Langham, and no other person than one of the gang could have dropped it under the body."

"I see the point," Nick rejoined. "The glove may help. The rascals evidently were guarding against leaving finger prints, and one of them may have removed his glove in order to use his revolver."

"Mebbe so," Nolan tersely allowed. "Here is Mr. Deland, into whose house Mr. Langham has been taken. The young lady is with him, but his daughter is missing."

"The lady is Miss Follett," said Deland, who had approached while the others were talking. "There is my residence, Mr. Carter," he added, pointing.

"What can you tell me?" Nick inquired.

"Not very much, sir," replied Deland, who was a prepossessing man of middle age. "I was in bed when the crime was committed. I heard two reports of a revolver, and I sprang up and looked from my chamber window. I also heard screams, evidently the cries of frightened women, and I hurried into my clothing and came out here."

"Were you the first to arrive here?"

"Yes. The robbers then had fled. I could see the tail light of their car just around the curve," said Deland, pointing down the road.

"They fled toward the city, then?"

"I am sure of that."

"Could you see whether they had an open car, or a taxicab?"

"It was a large open car. I could see it quite plainly in the moonlight. I should say there were five or six men in it."

"And Mr. Langham's limousine—where was it standing?" Nick inquired.

"Right there, sir," said Deland, indicating the precise spot, which was a few yards from where they were talking. "I hastened to render what aid I could. I found Mr. Langham on the floor of his car, with his feet dangling over the step. He had been struck on the head when attempting to get out."

"He was unconscious?"

"Yes. Miss Follett had fainted away and fallen back on the seat. The chauffeur had pitched out of the car, and was lying in the road. I saw at a glance that he was dead."

"You saw nothing of Miss Langham?"

"No, sir."

"What did you do then?"

"I shouted for help, and held up a car which was coming from the same direction the Langham's had come. There were two men and two women in it. One of the men helped me carry Mr. Langham into my house. Miss Follett had revived in the meantime, and she accompanied us, stating who they were and what had occurred. We soon revived Mr. Langham, and he then directed me to telephone to you, which I immediately did. That, Mr. Carter, is all that I can tell you."

"It seems to cover the ground," Nick replied, turning to inspect, with his search lamp, the interior of the limousine, which had been run to one side of the road.

He could discover nothing in it of special significance, however, but was still thus engaged when a shrill, peculiar whistle fell upon his ears.

"A signal from Chick," he said to himself. "He may have discovered something."

Nick found his assistant some forty yards down the road, a point considerably beyond where any of the people attracted to the scene had been standing. It was directly opposite a vacant lot, the unpaved sidewalk flanking which was without any curbing.

"What have you found?" Nick inquired, approaching.

"Where the bandits left their car," said Chick. "Here are tire tracks on the sidewalk, also drippings of oil from the motor."

"Just so," Nick nodded. "Plainly enough."

"They ran the car partly on the sidewalk, you see, and it was headed toward the city."

"They left it in a position to make a quick get-away."

"Sure thing! Here are tracks of the other tires in the gutter—and that's not all."

"What more?"

"One other track," said Chick, pointing. "Have a look at it."

Nick crouched to examine it, using his searchlight.

It was the imprint of a shoe, a high-heeled French tie—obviously the footprint of a woman.

"Ah, this helps a little," said Nick, after a moment. "It proves that Loretta Langham did not lose her head and seek safety in flight, as would have been reasonably possible. It shows plainly what became of her."

"It's her footprint, all right," said Chick.

"Certainly. She wore full-dress ties, very narrow and with pointed heels. She has, of course, been abducted."

"She must have, or her footprint would not be so far from the limousine, and so near the car used by the bandits. They forced her to go with them, and she trod in this damp earth in the gutter when stepping into their car."

"That's just the size of it," said Nick. "Here are tracks of some of the bandits, also, but they are so intermingled as to be of no value. Wait one moment. Keep those people away. I wish to make a few measurements."

Half a score of men had followed the famous detective nearly to the spot, eager to observe his method of investigation, but Chick now joined them and compelled them to remain at a distance.

Nick resumed his examination of the ground. He measured the distance between the wheel tracks in both directions, also the space between them and the drippings from the motor. He then studied with a lens and by the light of his searchlamp the impressions left by the tires, fanning away the dust here and there, and entering in his notebook the results of his scrutiny.

It took him about ten minutes to make these investigations, and he then rejoined Chick, saying quietly:

"There's no more to be picked up out here. We'll go and see what Langham can tell us. He may be able to give us a description of the rascals."

Mr. Deland accompanied them.

They found Mr. Langham bolstered up in an armchair in the library. His wounds had been dressed and neatly ban-

daged by a physician, who had been hurriedly called, and he was not much the worse for his injuries.

Miss Follett, an elaborately dressed and very beautiful girl, in the twenties, was also present, still looking very pale and nervous after her shocking experience, and terribly anxious concerning the fate of Lora Langham.

"Well, well, this is too bad, Mr. Langham," said Nick, while pressing the extended hand of the great railway magnate.

"Bad, Nick, hardly expresses it," Mr. Langham replied, with characteristic calmness in spite of the painful circumstances. "What have you learned? Anything definite about my daughter? I am in dreadful distress concerning her."

"She has been abducted, sir," Nick gently informed him. "Further than that, however, I think you need have no immediate fears. I have found evidence showing that she walked to the car used by the bandits, which convinces me that she was not injured. I shall do my utmost to trace the rascals and rescue her unharmed."

"Thank you—thank you!" Langham gratefully replied. "I knew that you would. That is why I sent for you at once. This young lady was with us, our guest—Miss Follett, of Philadelphia."

Nick acknowledged the introduction and proceeded to question both.

They could inform him, however, only that their chauffeur had seen a man lying directly across the road, and had slowed down to avoid running over him; that the man then had sprung up, while four others bounded from the darker side of the road, and that Marvin had been shot without an instant's warning.

Undertaking to alight, Mr. Langham had been struck down by one of the bandits and forced back into the limousine, on the seat of which Miss Follett already had fainted. Neither could tell Nick what Lora Langham did, nor what had followed, save that they had been robbed of all the money and jewelry on their persons

"At what would you value it, including that of your daughter," Nick inquired, after bringing out the above facts.

"Not less than sixty thousand dollars, surely," said Mr. Langham. "But the loss of that is nothing, when compared with my daughter's abduction."

"I understand, Langham, and will do all I can with the case," Nick assured him. "Can you give me any description of the robbers?"

"Only a vague one, which cannot be of much use. They appeared to be comparatively young men, five or six in all, and to be decently clad. All of them wore goggles, which partly disguised them and indicated that they had an automobile near by. But I saw no lights."

"The car was near by, but the lights had been extinguished," said Nick. "I think you have told me all you can impart, Mr. Langham, and I'll lose no time in looking farther. You are victims, undoubtedly, of the Lon Leary gang of auto bandits. Take my word for it—I shall do my best to run them down."

CHAPTER III.

NICK CARTER'S DEDUCTIONS.

It was broad daylight when Nick Carter returned home that morning. Eight o'clock found him seated in his business office with two of his assistants, Chick and Patsy Garvan, the latter having been informed of the crime of the previous night and the circumstances already set forth, as well as that Nick had undertaken to run down the desperadoes, recover the stolen property and rescue Lora Langham from the hands of her abductors.

Patsy shook his head a bit dubiously after having listened attentively to all of the details.

"It strikes me, chief, that you have bit off more than you can chew," said he dryly. "It don't look good to me."

"No?" queried Nick tentatively.

"We've got next to nothing to work on," Patsy argued. "A soiled kid glove, man's size, and an imperfect description of the crooks, so imperfect that it's hardly worth having. We ought to have more to start with, chief, it strikes me."

"I have more," Nick replied complacently.

"Is that so?"

"Considerable more."

"Gee! that's different, then," said Patsy, with countenance lighting. "I didn't suppose you were holding out on us."

Nick smiled, while Chick observed confidently:

"It's something of a deductive character, I guess, rather than tangible evidence."

"That rings a bull's-eye, Chick," said the detective.

"I thought so."

"Cut loose, chief," Patsy requested. "What are your views?"

Nick knocked the ashes from his after-breakfast cigar, then swung round a little in his swivel chair and faced both of his hearers.

"Before stating my views, which relate to what I told you last night, Chick, let me touch up your memories a little," said he.

"What you said about the suicide of Joe Rocket?"

"Yes. Also about the case in which he figured."

"Langham was in that case, too," put in Patsy. "Do you think, then, there is any connection between them?"

"I'll tell you as briefly as possible, Patsy, what I suspect," Nick replied.

"Shoot!" said Patsy sententiously. "I'm in the donkey class—all ears."

"That case, you remember, was a crooked stock-market job undertaken by a pool of speculators, of which Nate Herrick was the directing genius, with five well-known operators in league with him. They undertook to throw down Langham's big transcontinental combination, Federal Railway, with Jim Vincent, the lawyer, to help them. They might have succeeded, too, if Herrick had not fallen in love with Langham's handsome daughter, Loretta, thereby arousing the jealous hatred of Nell Garside, whom he discarded for the other, and who prevailed upon Vincent to expose the whole scheme to Langham in return for her love."

"She's a devil, all right," slipped in Patsy.

"Vincent was shot at Langham's door, to prevent the exposure," Nick proceeded. "Joe Rocket, chauffeur for Herrick, said to the latter in my hearing that he was the murderer, and when I would have arrested him for it, he swallowed a capsule of potassium cyanide and fell dead with the confession on his lips. That murder took place, you remember, just as a robbery was being committed in the Ellery residence near by, and by a gang of auto bandits."

"This same gang, most likely," said Chick.

"I now feel quite sure of it," Nick nodded. "That was three months ago, however, before they had so frightful a record. We got Rocket, all right, and also found the stolen jewelry in Herrick's stable. Taken with Rocket's confession, that naturally led us to believe that he was the leader of the gang, and that he had been secretly using Herrick's automobile for their night depredations. We were unable to get his confederates, however, and Herrick's lawyer pulled him and the rest of the pool out of a conspiracy charge, and all of them have since been at large."

"But that put them on the bum, chief, for fair," said Patsy. "That broke the whole pool, every man of it, by the quick rise in Federal Railway. It wiped out all of them and left them on the rocks."

"That's very true, Patsy," Nick admitted. "We failed the entire pool, Herrick, Carl Payson, and his partner, Jack Smart, also Phil Gerry, Tom Norton, and Charlie Lovell—all spectacular plungers in the stock market, and all since said to be on their uppers. To that extent, at least, we did well with the case."

"Gee, I should say so!"

"I have recently been thinking seriously about it, nevertheless, and I'm by no means satisfied with what we accomplished," Nick gravely added. "Furthermore, the crime of last night seems to confirm my misgivings."

"Misgivings?"

"That's the word."

"Misgivings of what?" asked Chick, with increasing interest.

"Before stating what I now suspect, let's see what we know about the doings of these parties since we broke them by smashing their pool," said Nick. "Nell Garside has disappeared and we don't know where she is located. One week after the crash, nevertheless, I saw her at dinner in an Italian restaurant with Herrick, which plainly indicated that they had patched up their differences and were again good friends. It's odds, then, that they had something in view, which we may safely assume would be of a shady character."

"Yes, undoubtedly," Chick readily agreed.

"Herrick's estate uptown was gobbled up by his creditors, and he since has been living where the spirit moved him," Nick continued. "The other members of the pool, Gerry, Payson, Smart, Norton, and Lovell, have been knocking around Wall Street and the brokerage offices, as before, dabbling in stocks in a much smaller way."

"They're a lot of pikers, now, nothing else," declared Patsy. "They couldn't margin a thousand shares of stock, chief, if they combined their resources. I've seen them, off and on, ever since the trial from which they escaped so luckily."

"So much for them, then," said Nick. "Now, concerning my misgivings."

"Go ahead, chief."

"As I said last night, Chick, I don't feel so sure that Joe Rocket killed himself intentionally. I begin to feel sure, in fact, that he did not."

"Why so?" Chick inquired. "You saw him take the poison."

"Very true. I don't think, however, that he knew it was poison."

"What else could he have thought?"

"He may have been told that the capsule contained only a drug."

"Told by whom?"

"By Nate Herrick."

"But with what object? Why would Herrick wished to have drugged him—or, if you are right, to have killed him?"

"In order to avert suspicion from himself," said Nick pointedly.

"H'm, I see!"

"Bear in mind that Herrick is a very slick, smooth, and polished fellow, a man who fascinates nearly every one he meets. Rocket swore by him."

"That's true."

"Suppose, now," Nick continued, "that Herrick was the man who killed Vincent, and that he knew of our work on the case, and that we were in a way to corner him, unless he could devise some crafty means to dispel our suspicion."

"I get you," Chick nodded.

"Wouldn't it have been dead easy for Herrick to have prevailed upon Rocket to make that confession in my hearing, and then swallow a capsule containing what he supposed to be a drug, one that would only cause all the indications of death, providing that Herrick had promised to revive him afterward and thus enable all hands to escape the law?"

"Why, yes, I think Rocket would have readily done that," Chick thoughtfully rejoined.

"I think that is just what he did."

"And that Herrick gave him a poison capsule instead."

"Exactly. Poison that killed Rocket instantly."

"But who, in that case, killed Jim Vincent?"

"I now suspect that Herrick killed him."

"But footprints showed that the assassin wore shoes having hobnails in the heels," said Chick. "We know that Rocket wore such shoes."

"Joe Rocket had several pairs of such shoes in the stable," Nick replied. "I saw them there. Herrick may have worn a pair of them on the night of the murder. He is quite crafty enough to have paved the way for his own safety by such means. I know, moreover, that he suspected the relations between Vincent and Nell Garside, and what the woman might attempt to get the lawyer to do. Though it's now too late to prove it, unless we can get additional evidence, I feel almost sure that I am right, and that Nate Herrick was the real murderer, both of Vincent and Rocket himself. Take it from me, in view of the circumstances that are piling up, he's as crafty and treacherous a devil as ever stood in leather."

"By Jove! you may be right, Nick, indeed," said Chick.

"Gee!" Patsy exclaimed. "In that case, chief, Herrick may have been back of the Ellery robbery—and even the big finger of the auto bandit gang, as far as that goes."

"Possibly," said Nick. "We can only assume it at present, however, as well as the killing of Joe Rocket. We have no tangible proof in either case. My theory, nevertheless, is strongly supported by one very significant fact."

"Namely?"

"The abduction of Lora Langham last night."

"The girl Herrick loved, and was hoping to marry."

"Yes—until she discovered his relations with Nell Garside. That settled it."

"Why not, indeed?" Chick remarked expressively.

"One other point is suggestive, also," Nick added.

"What is that?"

"The fact that Langham's limousine was held up by the

bandits, instead of any other of the many that might have proved equally profitable," Nick pointed out. "It seems like more than a coincidence."

"Yes, that's right, too," Chick agreed. "There seems to be, nevertheless, one contradictory point."

"What's that?"

"If Herrick is one of the bandits and is again on friendly terms with Nell Garside, wouldn't he be taking a long chance of treachery on her part by abducting Miss Langham? Jealousy might send her over the traces, as it did before, and she might again attempt to expose him."

"I have not overlooked that point, Chick," Nick replied.

"How do you regard it?"

"Herrick may have been forced to abduct her."

"Forced?"

"Yes."

"For what reason?"

"Lora Langham may have recognized him last night."

"H'm, that might be," Chick admitted. "That's a fine point, Nick."

"It's a very reasonable one, and, if correct, a very important one," Nick replied. "Herrick would have had, in that case, only one sane alternative. He would have had either to abduct Miss Langham, or kill her, in order to prevent an exposure. In view of his recent love for her, which would he have done?"

"Abduct her," Chick promptly declared.

"Great guns!" exclaimed Patsy. "If that's the situation, chief, she may meet a worse fate than death. We ought to get a move on, I'm thinking."

"You now see, evidently, that we have more to work on than you supposed," Nick remarked, smiling.

"Gee, I should say so! I'll wager, too, that you are hitting very near the mark."

"Whether I am, Patsy, or not, we'll set to work upon these theories, and lose no time in doing so," Nick said decidedly.

"What are your plans?" Chick inquired. "Have you any idea where Herrick can be found? I haven't seen him for weeks."

"Nor I," said Patsy.

"Nor more have I, nor am I going to hunt for him," replied Nick. "That is to say, not directly."

"Indirectly, eh?"

"So to speak," said Nick. "I wish, to begin with, to find Nell Garside. I think she is in league with these bandits."

"Why so?"

"Because a rip in this glove has been mended with brown silk, several shades lighter than the color of the glove," said Nick, taking from his desk the one found the previous night.

"What do you deduce from that?"

"The probability stated," said Nick. "This glove was not mended by a haberdasher, or silk of the same color would have been used."

"Surely."

"That it was mended by a woman, however, appears in the exceeding fineness of the stitches. During the trial in which she was compelled to testify, Nell Garside wore a brown dress of just about this color of silk. I deduce, therefore, that the silk may have come from a spool in her workbasket."

Chick laughed audibly, while Patsy rubbed his thighs quite gleefully.

"Gee! you're all right, chief," said he, grinning. "Do you ever overlook anything?"

"I never mean to, Patsy," said Nick, with a smile.

"But how can we pick up Nell Garside's track?" Chick questioned. "She hasn't been seen in New York, so far as I know, since the trial."

"Which indicates to me that she has been lying low for some reason," said Nick. "I think I know in what direction, at least, to look for her."

"Why so?"

"Because I know what make of automobile the bandits used last night, and very probably where they obtained it."

"You do?"

"Yes. I have made an exhaustive study of tire tracks, as you know, with measurements showing the length and width of the wheel base and the relative position of the motor, when revealed by oil drippings, a study which enables me to determine with almost absolute accuracy the make of any leading car. There is no chance for a mistake in this case, for the car used by the bandits differs materially from all of the others in the respects mentioned."

"What was the car?"

"It was one of the new Dexter, sixty-horse-power cars, made in Wallingford. There are comparatively few of them in use, as yet, which makes the problem all the simpler."

"But how can you determine where the bandits obtained it?"

"Three days ago the newspapers reported the theft of such a Dexter car, and offered a reward for its recovery. It was stolen by two men from in front of the residence of Doctor Amos Richardson, in Bridgeport, Connecticut."

"You think they were two of the bandits?"

"I do. They require a very fast and roomy car, such as the Dexter, as well as a frequent change of cars for obvious reasons. It's easier to steal them than to buy them, and they seldom use the same car more than twice. That's why we have recently read of so many thefts of automobiles in and around New York."

"But what about Nell Garside?" said Chick. "Do you suspect that she is in Bridgeport?"

"I feel quite sure of it."

"For what reason?"

"Because two men were seen to steal Doctor Richardson's car, Chick," Nick explained. "They also were seen in company with a woman a few minutes before the theft was committed. She was seen to walk by the physician's house alone, moreover, probably to learn whether he or the chauffeur was near, and she then joined the two men on the next corner. They got away with the car almost immediately, and the woman disappeared. Though she was veiled, the general description of her given in the newspapers fits Nell Garside very nicely. In view of all of the circumstances, therefore, I'm quite sure that she was the woman, and that she now is in Bridgeport."

"I agree with you," Chick quickly declared. "She may be lying low there for some reason."

"That's precisely what I suspect. Some evil reason, too, take my word for it!"

"That goes without saying."

"I have a strong hunch, in fact, that this gang is fram-

ing up a job to be done there, and that Nell Garside is serving them in some way in connection with it."

"By Jove! that also seems reasonable," Chick agreed. "It's not like a woman of Nell Garside's character and habits to desert New York so long without some strong incentive."

"That's the very point."

"By Jove!" Patsy put in. "If you are right, and a big job is on, chief, we ought to contrive to prevent it, and at the same time corner this gang."

"That's precisely what I intend to attempt," Nick roundly asserted.

"Have you laid any plans?" Chick inquired.

"Only in so far as you are concerned."

"You want me to go to Bridgeport?"

"As soon as possible."

"I can hit the next express."

"Do so, then," said Nick. "If Nell Garside is living there, she probably has taken a fictitious name. Make every effort to find her, nevertheless——"

"I'll find her, Nick, if she's there," Chick interrupted confidently.

"My money goes on that," slipped in Patsy.

"If successful, however, do not arrest her immediately," Nick further directed. "Try to learn, instead, what she is doing there, and with whom she is associating. If you succeed to that extent, you may be able to discover what is in the wind, or whether a crime is being framed up."

"Surely!"

"You may advise me by wire or phone, or use your own judgment as to the best move to make."

"I shall know what to do, all right," said Chick, rising to make his preparations for the journey. "I'll take along an outfit for any kind of work. You'll hear from me before long, I assure you. I haven't been your right-hand man all these years, Nick, for nothing. Anything more?"

"Nothing," said Nick. "In the meantime, with Patsy to aid me, I'll undertake to find out what has become of Nate Herrick, or what he is doing."

CHAPTER IV.

CHICK CARTER'S CRAFT.

Chick Carter, carefully disguised, arrived in Bridgeport at noon that day, two hours after the conference held in Nick Carter's Madison Avenue residence.

In a suit case with which he repaired to a leading hotel, where he registered as Andrew Black, of Boston, he also had materials for making up in any type of character that would best serve his purpose, providing he succeeded in finding his quarry, the thoroughly vicious, yet strikingly handsome young woman who had been missing from her customary New York haunts for nearly three months.

It would not ordinarily be considered an easy task—that of finding a locally unknown woman in a city of nearly a hundred thousand inhabitants. It was a task, however, which Chick Carter tackled with his customary acumen.

He began with inquiries in the Bridgeport police headquarters, which proved entirely futile. None of the force knew, or recalled, having seen a woman of Nell Garside's description. This further convinced Chick that she had some reason to avoid publicity.

Knowing her habits, however, and that she frequently visited the theaters, Chick sauntered into the lobby of a popular vaudeville house about a quarter hour before the beginning of the matinée performance. There was a line of people buying tickets, and he took a position quite near the window, enabling him to observe them.

"It's a chance worth taking, since it requires but little time," he said to himself. "I may hit upon the very afternoon she intends coming here."

Chick waited and watched.

Presently after about five minutes, a slender, somewhat flashily clad girl crossed the street and joined the line in the lobby, glancing sharply at the several women who were there. She was not more than twenty, with a pretty, yet rather crafty, face, lighted by a pair of searching, gray eyes.

"I wouldn't care to trust her much farther than I can see her," thought Chick, who was a keen physiognomist. "She's both clever and crafty, unless I'm much mistaken."

He did not anticipate, of course, that he should have any further interest in the girl, but he was standing so near that he heard what followed when she arrived at the ticket seller's window. She inquired tersely, while tendering her money:

"Got a ticket marked for Mollie Lane?"

The man glanced at a wire rack on the office wall, then shook his head.

"Nothing doing," said he pleasantly. "No ticket has been bought for Mollie Lane."

"Excuse me," said the girl, with a smile and wink. "My friend hasn't gone in yet, then. Got two good seats pretty well down?"

"Yes, very good."

"I'll pay for both. Give me one and mark the other Nellie Blair. She'll call for it."

"Certainly."

The girl paid and took one of the tickets, then hurried into the theater.

"Nellie Blair," murmured Chick. "I would rather the name had been Nellie Garside. It's half right, nevertheless, and—— H'm, stranger things have happened."

The strange thing did happen about two minutes later. A veiled woman entered the lobby and fell in behind half a dozen persons then approaching the window. Chick needed only a glance at her, at her fine figure, the waves of auburn hair under her stylish hat, and the gleam of her searching eyes through the meshes of her veil.

"By Jove, I've caught on," flashed through his mind. "Here's my quarry under my very nose."

The woman was, indeed, Nell Garside.

Chick saw that she had not noticed him. He walked quickly away, then stepped into the line directly behind her, with only one person between them, whom he used as a shelter while he listened.

"Is there a ticket here for Nellie Blair?" Nell inquired, gazing through the wire grating.

"Yes, madame."

"Paid for?"

"Yes."

"I'll take it, please. It's for me—thank you!"

The ticket was thrust through the opening under the grating and Nell hastened into the theater.

Chick arrived at the window a moment later. Bending close to the grating and displaying his detective badge to the ticket seller, at the same time giving him a decidedly expressive look, he said quietly:

"Have you got the seat directly in front of Nellie Blair?"

"I'm sorry, but it's gone," said the other, with a nod signifying that he understood.

"How near——"

"Stop a bit! It's here in the call rack, bought with another for a couple who haven't arrived. I'll fix you. I'll give the couple two other seats. Here's the ticket you want."

Chick paid and thanked him, also slipping a cigar under the grating, then followed his quarry into the theater. Knowing that his disguise would preclude recognition, he took the chair directly in front of Nell Garside, just as she was seating herself after removing her jacket. He had only one immediate design—that of overhearing what would pass between her and her companion during the few minutes before the performance began.

The two women already were talking glibly in whispers that easily reached the ear. Chick turned slightly in their direction.

"I reckoned I'd find you here," Mollie Lane was saying. "What kept you?"

"The trolley was slower than cold molasses," Nell Garside replied.

"They always are."

"True. They're like snails, when one is used to an auto. Besides, your old man was late with the steak. It was nearly one o'clock when I had lunched. I gobbled it down in a hurry."

"Never mind," Mollie whispered, with a giggle. "We'll do better later."

"How's that?"

"We'll go down to Carballi's after the show and have dinner before hiking home. I haven't lunched yet and shall be as hungry as a shark by that time."

"Haven't lunched?"

"No. I couldn't leave the office in time. I had all I could do to coax the cashier into letting me off this afternoon."

"Balky, was he?"

"Some."

"We'll take that out of him a little later."

"You bet! But I worked him for the afternoon, all right, let me alone for that. You'll be hungry, too, by six o'clock. Carballi sets out scrumptious fried chicken and his spaghetti can't be beat. We'll fire a big feed and a bottle, Nell, and then hike home on the eight-o'clock car."

"That'll suit me, all right."

"It will land us there before nine."

"There'll be something doing by that time, or sooner," said Nell Garside significantly.

"Visitors?"

"That's what."

"From the metrop?"

"Sure."

"To fix up the trick?"

"Most likely."

"Bully!" Mollie whispered. "It can be turned all right. How's the canary?"

"Beating her wings against the bars."

"Humph! Much good that will do."

"I hope she'll beat her head off," Nell Garside muttered, with bitter asperity.

"Mebbe she will?"

"Nothing would suit me better."

"It's likely to be her finish, in any case."

"It will be, Mollie, if——"

A blast of march music from the orchestra prevented Chick from hearing anything more. He had heard enough, however, not only to convince him that Nick had sized up the case quite correctly, but also to suggest a course which he most likely might shape with some advantage.

Chick remained until the performance was about half finished, then arose and left the theater without once having glanced at the two women. Neither of them, as a matter of fact, had had the slightest interest in him. He then returned to the police headquarters, where he had an interview with the chief in his private office, with whom both he and Nick were very well acquainted.

"I wish this time, chief, to ask about another girl," he announced.

"Still another?" laughed the chief.

"Yes," said Chick, smiling. "The cry is still they come—you're familiar with Shakespeare, of course."

"Once, but that was long ago," grinned the chief. "Who is the girl?"

"Her name is Mollie Lane. Ever heard it?"

"Yes, indeed. I know her by sight."

"What can you tell me?" Chick asked.

The chief informed him that Mollie Lane was the daughter of one James Lane, more commonly called Jim Lane, who owned and ran a public road house of shady reputation about eight miles from the city, but who paid his bills promptly and gave the police no more trouble than was, at infrequent intervals, occasioned by his sometimes drunken and belligerent patrons. The chief further stated that Lane's family consisted of only his wife and daughter, and that the latter came to work daily in the city.

"Do you know where she is employed?" Chick asked.

"Yes. She works in the office of the Acme Manufacturing Company."

"A large concern?"

"One of the largest in the city. It employs nearly a thousand hands."

"Good enough!" Chick nodded. "Now, chief, get next to your telephone. I wish to talk with some friend of yours whom you can trust, and who will do you a little favor. I know you have hundreds of such friends."

"As many as that, Chick, I assure you."

"Let it be some friend in a near city, one who owns an automobile and employs a chauffeur."

"How will Danbury do?"

"Fine."

"I'll call up George Mace, a prominent coal dealer. You can depend on him."

"Capital!" said Chick. "Get next."

The chief hastened to comply. He soon was in communication with the Danbury merchant, to whom he stated what he wanted; and he introduced the detective over the wire and then gave Chick the telephone.

Chick talked with Mace for about five minutes, then turned again to the chief, to whom he proceeded to carefully state what he further required.

Leaving police headquarters, Chick next repaired to a secondhand store where he purchased a quantity of wearing apparel which he packed in a defaced suit case. He then checked it in a cheap hotel near by, where he registered under the name of Jerry Gilman.

Ten minutes later found him talking with a chauffeur

in a public garage, a clean-cut, prepossessing chap about his own size. Chick pledged him to secrecy, then purchased from him a complete chauffeur's outfit, somewhat the worse for wear.

He then returned to the hotel in which he first had registered, where he went up to his room and spent half an hour in perfecting a disguise which he thought would serve his purpose.

It was half past six when the finishing touches were made.

Somewhat more than an hour later, two flashily clad, sporty-looking men, who appeared to be rather the worse for liquor, might have been seen stealthily watching two women through a side window of Carballi's restaurant. It was a rather inferior place, patronized chiefly by the fast set of the lower classes. It was located in one of the water-front streets, with a convenient entrance for ladies in a court flanking one side of the building.

The two men had been waiting and watching for nearly half an hour. Suddenly one of them said quietly:

"They have finished. Come on."

"I'm with you."

Both men hastened out of the court, but halted just around the corner and nearly in front of the restaurant. They waited until the voices of the approaching women could be heard. There appeared to be no other persons in the immediate locality, and both men then swaggered around the corner and into the court, reeling slightly, and just in time to confront Nell Garside and her companion.

"Ah, girls!" cried one, while both blocked their way. "Just going to dinner, or——"

"None of your business where we're going!" Nell Garside sharply interrupted, though both she and Mollie had recoiled involuntarily.

"What's that?" asked the same man, with a laugh and a leer.

"None of your business, I said," snapped Nell. "Step aside and let us pass."

"Oh, I say, girlie, don't get fussy. And don't be in a hurry, or I'll——"

The swaying ruffian lurched nearer to her, attempting to clasp her in his arms, but Nell Garside thrust him away angrily, while a cry of alarm broke from Mollie.

It was echoed by a growl from around the near corner, followed by the quick fall of approaching steps—those of a man wearing the leather jacket and cap of a chauffeur. He looked grim and threatening, an unprepossessing fellow, who seemed to take in the situation at a glance.

"See here, you fellows, cut it out," he snarled harshly. "Let these women alone, or——"

"Why are you butting in?" snapped one, interrupting.

"That's right, too," chimed in the other. "Why are you messing in?"

"That's why!"

The chauffeur met their threatening questions with a blow. It sent one of the insolent fellows into the gutter. He was up in an instant, with a smooch of blood on his cheek, or so it appeared, and both men then set upon the chauffeur.

He met them halfway, with an ugly, sinister laugh. One clenched fist, shooting straight out from his shoulder, sent the same man headlong upon the court pavements. A quick uppercut seemed to catch the other man squarely on the chin, for he uttered a groan, with his knees buckling under him, and fell in a crimped heap on the sidewalk.

"Come on!" snarled the chauffeur. "Get up and have some more. I'll hand you all you want."

The invitation was not accepted. Both men scrambled up, glared at him for an instant with fear-filled eyes, and then turned and ran at top speed out of the court and up the street.

It was a bit of pugilistic work admirably performed.

The ruffians were two men provided by the Bridgeport chief of police.

The chauffeur was, of course—Chick Carter.

CHAPTER V.

A DARING SUBTERFUGE.

Chick Carter gazed with sinister eyes after the fleeing men, then turned with a smile of contempt and faced the two women, who had waited to see the end of the brief encounter.

Noting the courage and prowess of their defender, as well as his somewhat hangdog and desperate expression during the fray, Nell Garside was hit with an idea which presently took full possession of her—precisely as Chick designed and anticipated.

"Beg pardon, ladies, for butting in," said he, nodding to both. "I heard one of you cry for help, so I reckoned I was taking no liberties."

"Liberties, indeed!" Nell exclaimed, steadily gazing at him. "You have done us a very good turn."

"I should say so," supplemented Mollie enthusiastically. "We must repay you. Got any coin with you, Nell?"

"Only some small change, which would cut no ice. I left my roll at home."

"Me, too!"

"But if you will come with us, sir——"

"Oh, that's all right, ladies," Chick interrupted, with an indifferent gesture. "The pleasure's all mine. The service is not worth mentioning. Forget it. I could turn down half a dozen such blackguards and not sweat a hair." Who are they?"

"Strangers to us," said Nell. "You were very kind and we owe you——"

"Say!" Chick again interrupted, with a sinister laugh. "Don't keep plugging that I owe you at me. You don't owe me anything. You'd like me to see you home, mebbe, or as far as a car. I'd be glad to, all right."

"Do so, then," said Nell, slipping her hand through his arm, while Mollie Lane readily took the other. "I wish to talk with you. Come this way with us."

"Any old way suits me," Chick replied, while they walked up the street. "I'm on the world just now, with nowhere special to go, and nothing to do—barring getting a living."

"Are you out of work?" Nell inquired.

"Yes. But that's nothing new. Work don't agree with me any too well. I only work when I'm broke."

"Are you broke now?" asked Nell, laughing.

"Next door to it."

"What is your business?"

"Chauffeur."

"Been working round here?"

"Danbury," said Chick tersely. "Got fired this morning. Landed in Bridgeport this afternoon. I'll strike a job to-morrow, mebbe."

"What's your name?"

"Jerry Gilman."

"Whom did you work for in Danbury? I know a good many people there."

"George Mace," said Chick. "He's a coal dealer."

"I know him," nodded Mollie. "That is to say, I know where his place of business is."

"Why did he fire you?" Nell Garside inquired, after several furtive glances at Chick's grim face and occasional frown.

"Oh, he thought I swiped a diamond pin, and I couldn't convince him that I didn't," Chick admitted, with a growl. "He gave me the grand bounce and out I went—bingo!"

"Did you light hard?" questioned Mollie jokingly.

"Not too hard," said Chick, with a grin. "But I didn't steal his dirty little spark. If I had, I wouldn't be broke as soon as this, would I?" he added with a quizzical smile for both, as if he had begun to appreciate their true character.

Nell Garside laughed again and pressed his arm with her hand

"Give it to me straight," she said quietly. "Did you lift the spark?"

"Say! you're a good one," chuckled Chick, in a bantering way. "He can't prove that I did. I'd be a fool, mebbe, if I put you in a way of doing so."

"I wouldn't give you away," Nell quickly assured him.

"You bet we wouldn't," put in Mollie.

"I'll take your word for it," said Chick. "Just the same, I reckon we'll cut out the spark talk. Which way are we going? You'll have to steer me. I'm a stranger in this place."

"Never been here before?"

"Only through it. Never stopped."

"Where are you going to-night?"

"Oh I've found a hang-out," said Chick carelessly. "It's the Sadler House. It's a bum shelter, but all I could stand for. My luggage is down there. I was just walking around for my health, when I heard those blackguards tackle you."

"You tackled them, Jerry, all right," said Nell familiarly. "We take a car here."

"All right," said Chick, looking a bit regretfully. "Sorry to leave you, but—well, so long."

"Stop a moment!" Nell slipped her hand in his. "Would you care to go farther with us?"

"Would I?" Chick questioned quickly. "Would a duck care to flirt with a millpond on a hot day? You bet I'd care. I'll go as far as you like."

"I might put you in way of a job," said Nell.

"Working for you?"

"No, not for me, but for a friend of mine."

"I'd take it."

"You might not like it."

"Why not?"

"You might be asked to take chances that would be objectionable," Nell said pointedly.

"Chances, eh?" Chick smiled, shrugging his shoulders. "I take longer chances every day than most men would take."

"On the level?"

"Yes, on the level," Chick forcibly insisted. "Don't let a little thing like that worry you. I'll take any kind of a job—if there's enough in it."

"That sounds pretty good," Nell replied, smiling. "Can you run most of the automobiles?"

"All of them," Chick promptly asserted. "There isn't a gasoline horse on the market that I can't run."

"And run it well?"

"None better. You can gamble on that."

"Very good. My friend will be glad to know that."

"But you're overlooking one thing."

"What's that?"

"Mebbe my references wouldn't suit your friend," said Chick, with sinister dryness. "I ain't much stuck on 'em myself. Mace will throw me down, for fair, and——"

"Cut out that," said Nell shortly. "You won't need any references for the friends I travel with."

"Won't, eh? That sounds good to me, all right," Chick rejoined. "Any friends you travel with are good enough for me."

"That settles it, then," Nell said hurriedly. "Here comes our car."

"I'm to go with you?"

"It's up to you, Jerry."

"It's you and your friends for mine, then," Chick eagerly declared. "I'll hang round on the platform. Pay your own fares. I'm down to brass tacks."

"We'll settle," Nell nodded, as they left the curbing to board the approaching trolley car. "Get off when we do and follow us."

"I don't need those directions," grinned Chick, while he helped her into the car.

His hazardous venture, undertaken single-handed, scarce needs comment. He appreciated the risky nature of it, that he was going up against desperadoes of the worst kind, that he carried his life in his hands, and that the slightest slip might expose his subterfuge and precipitate a situation from which he would not escape alive.

Chick had paved the way very carefully, however, and apprehensions were foreign to his nature. It was good enough for him that he was, if his suspicions were correct, coming in contact with the gang Nick was seeking.

A run of half an hour took the trolley car well out of the city and into a somewhat wooded section, where Nell and Mollie alighted at a diverging road, through which they immediately turned their steps.

Chick sprang from the car a moment later and speedily overtook them.

"Your friend lives well out of town," he remarked to Nell, while he took the arm of each woman. "Are you heading for his house?"

"No," Nell replied. "We are going to this girl's home. Her name is Mollie Lane. Mine is Nell Garside."

"Thanks," Chick nodded. "I've told you mine. We're on the same footing, now, and I can be a bit more polite."

"Nerve, Jerry, cuts more ice with us than politeness," said Nell significantly.

"I've got my share of nerve, Miss Garside. You produce a man who can get my goat, and I'll—well, I'm not given to boasting. I've got nerve enough, all the same, to meet any situation."

"I really think so, Jerry," Nell allowed. "That's the chief reason why I wanted you to accompany us. You'll learn the other reasons a little later."

"That's good enough for me."

"Ah, Mollie, the bunch has returned. Here are tracks of the tire chains in the road."

"I reckoned they might show up before us," said Mollie "There's the house, Jerry. That's where we hang out."

"I see," said Chick, well pleased with the successful beginning of his venture.

They had rounded a curve in the woodland road, and Chick already had noticed the glow from lighted windows through the intervening trees. Fifty yards more brought into plain view a large, old wooden house, somewhat back from the road, with a veranda and a broad, open yard in front. In the rear were a stable, two large sheds, and numerous smaller outbuildings, all backed with a rise of wooded hills.

On a tall post in front of the house was a swinging sign. It was much the worse for time and weather, and it bore only the two words: "Lane's Inn."

It was the only dwelling of any kind within a circle of half a mile, and it was shut out of distant observation from any direction by the hills and woods.

"What do you say?" questioned Mollie. "What do you think of it?"

"It looks all right to me," replied Chick approvingly. "It's just the kind of a place I'd select—for more than one purpose. I'm glad to come out here."

"You'll not regret coming," said Nell, more truthfully than she imagined.

The aspect of the place was about what Chick expected from what the police chief had told him about it. As he approached with the two women into the broad, open area in front of the house, he saw that several of the lower rooms were lighted, also that a touring car stood near the stable. Its lamps were out, but the voices of men in the house could be faintly heard.

On the steps of a low, front veranda stood a burly, red-faced man in the fifties, wearing a baggy gray suit and a woolen shirt. He came down to meet the new arrivals, sharply regarding Chick, and saying, a bit gruffly:

"You're home, eh? I allowed you'd come on that car. I heard it stop at the crossroad."

"We're here, Jim, all right," Nell Garside replied. "Who came with Payson?"

"All except Nate. He's still in Babylon. Who is this——"

"Never mind who," Nell interrupted, when Lane again gazed sharply at the detective. "He's all right, so shake with him and we'll go in. Anybody else there?"

"No." Lane grimly shook his head while he took Chick's hand. "We're open to no one else to-night—barring one."

"I know," said Nell. "That is Jim Lane, Jerry, Mollie's dad," she added, while she led Chick into the house. "Come with me and I'll knock you down to some of my friends."

Mollie already had hastened around the house and entered a back door.

Chick followed Nell in the front way, after having acknowledged the informal introduction to Lane, who remained standing alone on the veranda.

Nell conducted Chick into a large dining room. A sideboard well filled with bottles and glasses occupied one end of the room. A gaunt, angular woman was serving liquor to five men seated around one of the tables. All were dust-covered and clad a bit roughly, three of them in leather jackets, while their caps and goggles had been carelessly tossed on the table.

Chick knew all of them. They were the five men who, led and directed by Nate Herrick, had comprised the pool that nearly had wrecked Federal Railway several months before.

One of their number, Carl Payson, had at that time been Herrick's right-hand man, and he now appeared to exercise a sort of mild authority over his companions in the absence of Herrick, who, Chick rightly inferred from Lane's remark, was then in New York.

For Payson checked with a gesture the startled exclamations that arose when Nell entered with a stranger, though his own dark face took on a scowl of disapproval. He swung round in his chair and demanded sharply:

"What's this, Nell? Have you gone daffy? Why have you brought——"

"A friend with me?" Nell Garside interrupted snappishly. "Because I wanted to, Payson; that's why!"

"But——"

"There aren't any buts. Any man for whom I vouch is all right, and you'd ought to know it. Cut out your kick and your ugly looks. I'll tell you in a very few words who he is and why I brought him here."

Chick Carter had seated himself on a corner of the large table, apparently utterly indifferent to these remarks and the threatening scowls of the bandit gang.

CHAPTER VI.

CHICK TURNS CROOK.

Nell Garside proceeded without delay to square herself for the step she had taken. She began with ordering Chick into the adjoining kitchen, to which he went without comment, and Nell quickly closed the door.

She then told the gang all about Jerry Gilman, or what she supposed she knew about him, and pictured in glowing colors his recent exploit and the advantages to be derived from adding him to the gang.

The effect of her disclosure was precisely what she anticipated. It appeared that the gang was in need of one more man, one familiar with the mechanism of the various automobiles and capable of skillfully running any of them, and Nell's hearers knew that Herrick, their leader, had long been looking for a crook who had the qualifications mentioned, as well as the requisite courage and nerve for their infamous work.

"You'll find him all right," Nell argued, in conclusion, though the frowns of her hearers had given way to looks of grim approval. "I can read a man correctly, and I've seen what this man can do. I'm convinced that he already is a thief, and it will be soft walking to get him to join us. You'll find him all right, Carl, take my word for it."

"What do you say?" questioned Payson, turning to his confederates.

"It looks good to me," said Phil Gerry, a florid man of thirty.

"And to me," said Jack Smart, who had been Payson's partner in a bucket-shop business.

"What do you say, Norton?" Payson inquired, turning to a stocky, dark man at one end of the table.

"It's worth trying," Norton growled, then added significantly: "We can easily get rid of him, if necessary."

"Why don't you verify some of his statements?" put in the only man who had not expressed his opinion. "Jim has a telephone. Call up the Danbury man and ask about the fellow. We can find out whether he's an expert driver, at least, and if convinced of the alleged theft—well, that

would settle it. This Jerry Gilman would be the very man we want."

"By thunder, Lovell, that's a good idea," Payson cried approvingly. "I ought to have thought of that. Call him in here, Nell. I'll find out how much truth there is in his story."

Nell Garside hastened to obey.

Chick had anticipated all this. He had paved the way for it. To have caught Nick Carter's right-hand man lame in such a situation, would have been like catching a weasel asleep. Chick swaggered into the room with increasing confidence, moreover, upon observing the less antagonistic looks of the several bandits.

Payson at once took the ribbons.

"Your name is Jerry Gilman, I'm told," he said curtly.

"That's what," Chick replied, nodding. "More correctly—Jeremiah Gilman. I ain't overproud of it."

This dry sally brought a laugh from most of his hearers, and Payson quickly arose and said:

"You come with me, Mr. Gilman. I wish to phone to the man who, you say, discharged you this morning."

"What for?" Chick demanded, frowning.

"To hear what he'll say about you."

"Well, he won't say anything good. I'll tell you that for a starter."

"Do you object to my talking with him?" Payson questioned suspiciously.

"Not a bit," Chick quickly declared. "There's only one thing I insist upon."

"What is that?"

"That you leave him to guess where the phone call comes from. I don't want him put wise to the direction I have taken."

This magnificent stipulation had the effect intended.

"All right, Gilman," said Payson, smiling, while his confederates laughed again. "I'll guard against that. Come this way."

Chick followed him into a front room, in which a telephone was affixed to one of the walls.

"What's the Danbury man's name?" Payson demanded, approaching the instrument.

"George Mace," said Chick. "He's a coal dealer."

Payson was in communication with him in less than five minutes, and he learned—what Chick had directed Mace to impart, if called upon.

Mace stated, in effect, not that he had discharged Jerry Gilman, but that the latter had stolen not only a diamond pin, but also forty dollars and a gold watch and chain, and had fled from Danbury the previous day.

"Have you got the goods with you?" Payson whispered, glancing at Chick.

Chick nodded.

"Describe the pin and watch, Mr. Mace," Payson directed.

"Who are you?" Mace inquired.

"I'm the Springfield chief of police," said Payson. "We have arrested a man who, we have learned, has been in your employ. Is he an expert chauffeur?"

"Very. None better. But he's a rascal," Mace declared.

"Describe the stolen articles," Payson requested.

The coal dealer obeyed, though he described, of course, Chick's own pin and watch, the detective having given him the necessary information.

"That's all. We'll advise you later," said Payson abruptly, hanging up the receiver. "Now, Gilman, let's see the stolen articles."

Chick produced them from an inside pocket of his leather jacket.

Payson examined them and found that they answered the description, and he then returned them.

"I guess you're all right, Jerry," he said, laughing. "Nevertheless, I'll call up the Sadler House, and find out whether you are registered there, as stated."

"You'll find I am," said Chick. "Here's a check for my luggage, a suit case containing my clothing."

Payson called up the hotel, nevertheless, the clerk of which confirmed Chick's story.

"That does settle it," said he heartily, as he again replaced the receiver and extended one hand to the waiting detective.

"Satisfied, are you?" said Chick.

"Perfectly. You'll pardon me for taking these precautions, Gilman, but——"

"Oh, I didn't mind," Chick nodded carelessly. "It was up to you."

"And it is now up to you, Gilman, to decide whether you wish to take chances with us," Payson said, more earnestly. "Do you know whom you are up against?"

"No, nor care," said Chick promptly. "I'll take any chance you fellows will take—if there's enough in it."

"And not squeal if caught?"

"I'd never yip on a pal. You can bet on that."

"Will you take orders and obey them?"

"As quick as given, so be it I'm on an even footing with the rest of the gang."

"You will be."

"You can count me in the game, then, if you like."

"But you don't know what the game consists of."

"I don't care," Chick again asserted. "If it's good enough for you, it's good enough for me. That's where I stand."

"And that's perfectly satisfactory for the present," Payson declared. "I'll tell you all about it a little later. Did you ever hear of Lon Leary?"

"I've read about him in the newspapers," said Chick, without a change of countenance.

"And about his gang?"

"Sure."

"Suppose you were invited to join it. What would you say?"

"I'd say yes—so quick 'twould make your head swim!" Chick forcibly exclaimed.

Payson laughed and shook hands with him again.

"Good for you!" he said heartily. "Come on in and shake with the others."

Chick complied with alacrity, and as calmly as if the hand he extended to each did not hold his life in its palm.

The intercourse during the next half hour was along similar lines, as may be inferred, but Chick displayed no inquisitive interest in the doings of these men, nor any apprehensions as to what would be required of him.

On the contrary, with consummate tact and hints at fictitious personal episodes which he knew would appeal to them, Chick succeeded in so favorably impressing his hearers, that any lingering misgivings were almost completely dispelled.

An interruption occurred after half an hour, however,

in the person of Jim Lane, who came striding through the entry from the front of the house.

"Tobey is here, Payson," he gruffly announced. "He's waiting outside."

Payson quickly arose and glanced sharply at his confederates.

"I thought he would come on the nine-o'clock car," said he. "Bring him in the back way, Jim, then remain here."

"What if any one else shows up?"

"We'll station Gilman out there, instead of you, to prevent them from entering," Payson replied. "It will be a good job for him for a starter. Go to the front of the house, Jerry, and inform any visitors that there is nothing doing. Send them about their business. We wish to hold a conference with a party we've been waiting for, and we don't want any intruders."

"I'm wise," Chick said readily. "I'll head off intruders, all right. Leave them to me."

"Go ahead, then," and Payson nodded approvingly.

Chick hastened through the entry and out of the house. Jim Lane and another man were just disappearing around a corner of the veranda.

CHAPTER VII.

HOW CHICK MADE GOOD.

Chick Carter had closed the front door when he emerged from the house. He found himself alone in the stillness and gloom of the front veranda. It seemed good to be alone, however, if only for a short time, and relieved of the strain imposed upon him by the hazardous part he was playing. The night air was refreshing, and the solitude enabled him to calmly consider all that had transpired.

"I certainly am in with the right gang, the Lon Leary bandits," he said to himself, sitting down on one of the steps. "Evidently, however, this place is only a temporary headquarters, selected for some big job they intend doing, precisely as Nick suspected. They have rung Jim Lane and his wife into it, or have agreed to pay them well for the shelter afforded them, and it's a safe wager that Mollie, also, is in the game. That's what she referred to in the theater, when she spoke of fixing up the trick. The man who has just arrived named Tobey, also must figure in the scheme.

"It's long odds, moreover, that Lora Langham was brought here last night and now is confined in some part of the house," Chick continued to reason. "She's the canary so bitterly referred to by Nell Garside. Beating her wings against the bars, eh? I'll find a way to break those bars a little later. Furthermore, these rascals are the visitors mentioned. They may have been back to New York to-day, in order to avert suspicion by showing up in their customary haunts. Herrick has remained there, evidently, for some reason.

"Now, then, the question is—what job are they planning? When is it to be pulled off, and how can I prevent it? The better way may be to let them attempt it, by Jove, and catch them in the act. If we could nail them red-handed, as it were, the conviction of the entire gang then would be a cinch. I've put myself in right with the rascals, at all events, and I'll stick here under cover of my disguise and make the most of it."

Chick's eyes were open and his ears alert during the brief time given to this sizing up of the situation. He saw no sign of any intruders, and was sure that none of the gang was nosing around outside of the house.

Rising quietly, he stole around to the nearer of the dining-room windows.

A slender, cadaverous man of fifty, with black hair and a full beard, occupied the chair Chick had vacated only a few minutes before. He looked pale and perturbed, as if he had a load on his mind—as, in fact, he had.

"That fellow must be Tobey," thought Chick, peering in cautiously. "But who is he and how does he fit in? Every man of the gang, as well as the three women—all present and accounted for. It's safe enough for me, then, to wait and listen."

He could hear quite plainly most that was said in the room, and what little he missed he was well able to supply.

"That's all there is to it, Tobey," Payson was forcibly saying. "Herrick insists upon your coming to New York to see him, as I told you yesterday, and he expects you to be there to-morrow."

"I'm prepared to go, of course, though I would have preferred to meet him here," Tobey nervously replied. "It's not easy to get away from the office for an entire day."

"You can fix it up all right. The Acme Manufacturing Company will run that long without you."

"H'm! that settles one point, at least," thought Chick. "The place where the job is to be done. It's about what I suspected."

"It's not easy for a corporation of that size to run without its cashier," Tobey protested, unconsciously supplying Chick with still another point.

"Possibly not," Payson admitted. "Nevertheless, you must meet Herrick in New York. He's the big finger of this gang, and the one who plans all of our work. You must go on and see him to-morrow, therefore, if the trick is to be turned on Saturday, when your pay-roll money is in the office. To-morrow is Friday, you know."

"Yes, I know, and the sooner it's done the better," Tobey allowed.

"You will go, then?"

"Yes, I'll go."

"On the morning train?"

"Yes, of course."

"Very good," Payson said approvingly. "You and Herrick never have met, I believe."

"No, never," Tobey replied, shaking his head. "How am I to know him? Where can I see him?"

"All that has been arranged," Payson proceeded to explain. "We are compelled, as you know, to guard ourselves with many precautions. Some of the wise bulls, the Carters, for example, would otherwise be putting something across on us."

"We'll do that, all right," Chick mentally assured himself, grimly smiling.

"Well, what am I to do?" questioned Tobey, a bit impatiently. "I'm here for instructions."

"You are to meet Herrick at precisely eleven o'clock to-morrow morning," said Payson.

"Where?"

"Go to the Ascott House, in Broadway, but do not register, nor make any inquiries. Instead, take the elevator and go to the third floor and to room ninety-six. Herrick will be alone there to receive you."

"That's simple enough. Is that all?"

"No. Here is half of a plain card, torn irregularly, as you see."

"Well?"

"Herrick has the other half," Payson continued. "Give this piece to him, and he will fit the torn edge to that of the pieces he carries. That will establish your identity and serve as an introduction. He will know positively that you are Gideon Tobey."

Chick mentally noted another point—the man's full name.

"I understand," replied Tobey, taking the torn card and slipping it into his vest pocket. "What more?"

"Herrick will then plan with you all the details of the job," Payson added. "That having been done, you must return home, but do not come here nor seek any further intercourse with us. Herrick will poin us here Saturday morning, and we shall do the job as he plans it."

"And after it's done?" questioned Tobey.

"You'll then get yours, and get it promptly," Payson assured him. "Let your mind rest easy on that point. We never deal doubly with our pals."

"By thunder, this cashier is throwing down the corporation he works for," Chick said to himself. "It looks like a scheme to steal the pay-roll money, and in such a way that the cashier will not be suspected. By Jove, I'll put Nick in a way to learn all of the details and get the entire gang."

Chick was allowed no time for deliberate consideration of the circumstances, nor of the many contingencies involved, for Tobey already was buttoning his coat to depart.

"I'll go on the morning train, then, and keep the appointment," said he, rising. "If there is no more to be said to-night, I can hit the ten-o'clock trolley car to town."

"True—if nothing hits you," thought Chick grimly.

"Go ahead, then, alone," said Payson pointedly. "We'll take no chances of being seen with you."

Chick waited to hear no more. He darted to the front of the house, drawing his revolver while he ran, and winding his handkerchief tightly around the butt of it.

Tobey came out of the house a moment later—alone.

Chick knew that none of the gang had left the dining room. He could hear them still discussing the brief conference.

Tobey glanced at him and would have departed without speaking, but Chick joined him and said familiarly, while they walked toward the road.

"The business didn't take very long, Mr. Tobey."

"No, not very," Tobey said doubtfully, evidently uncertain concerning Chick's identity and his relations with the gang.

"Heading for town now?"

"Yes."

"You can catch the ten-o'clock car, I think," said Chick, at the elbow of his companion.

"That is my intention," was the reply, nervously made. "You had better not go with me, lest——"

Mr. Gideon Tobey's protest ended then and there.

They had arrived in the road, at a point where the trees precluded any view from the house, and also out of hearing from it.

Chick did not stand upon ceremony. He had no time to hold up this man politely, nor to mince matters at the cost, perhaps, of his own exposure and the perversion of his designs.

With his bandaged revolver, which would inflict no serious wound, yet which was as effective as a sand bag, he dealt Tobey a single, swift, sudden blow on the head, instantly dropping the treacherous scoundrel senseless upon the ground.

"Down and out for the present, at least," Chick muttered, after a quick examination. "I'll make sure of him until I can do more, nevertheless."

Five minutes later, Chick left Tobey bound hand and foot, effectively gagged and secured to a tree some thirty yards from the road. All the while, working with amazing rapidity, he had had an eye on the house, from which no one had emerged, convincing him that his doings were not suspected.

As Chick sauntered toward the veranda, nevertheless, as calmly as if nothing had transpired, Payson and two of his confederates appeared at the front door.

"Looking for some one?" Chick asked quickly, to impress them with his vigilance. "A man just left here."

"That's all right, Jerry," Payson replied. "We are looking for you."

"I'm right here—been here all the time," said Chick. "No one has showed up."

"I only wanted to tell you that our bunch is dead tired, and that we're going to bed," Payson explained. "You needn't stand guard any longer. It now is too late for visitors. Lane has no bedroom for you, but you can sleep on the parlor couch."

"That's good enough for me," Chick declared agreeably, while they entered the house.

"You'll fare better after to-night," Payson added, heading for the dining room.

Chick laughed indifferently, then entered into a conversation with Nell Garside, which continued until the five men went to their rooms. The women retired soon after, and Lane and his wife remained to put out the lights.

Half past ten found the house in darkness—and Chick alone in the parlor, writing with the help of his searchlight, a hurried letter to Nick.

The contents of it can easily be imagined.

At eleven o'clock Chick quietly raised a window and left the house. He succeeded in heading off the last trolley car to the city. He talked briefly with the conductor, pledged him to secrecy, and promised him a hundred dollars to mail the letter to Nick that night—with the torn card Chick had taken from Tobey's vest pocket.

In accord with further instructions given the conductor, the Bridgeport chief of police arrived in a motor at the crossroad at precisely midnight.

Two men joined him there—Chick Carter and Gideon Tobey.

Chick quietly told the chief what he required, and his instructions were rigidly followed.

A little later the Tobey family were informed by telephone that he had taken the night train to New York, instead of waiting until morning; but the recreant cashier of the Acme Manufacturing Company occupied, in reality —a cell in the city prison.

At one o'clock that night Lane's Inn was securely closed and Chick Carter was sleeping soundly on the couch assigned him.

He had taken steps which he knew would make a sure case against the bandit gang.

He knew that Nick Carter would learn precisely of what the contemplated crime consisted.

CHAPTER VIII.

IN ROOM 96.

Uncle Sam's mail moves quickly.

The trolley-car conductor in whom Chick had confided, proved as good as his word. The letter intrusted to him, which he forwarded by special delivery, was received by Nick Carter at precisely eight o'clock the following morning—three hours before the expected rendezvous in the Ascott House.

Though Nick and Patsy Garvan had not been idle while Chick was busy in Bridgeport, their efforts to find any trace of Nate Herrick, or of the men known to have been associated with him in the recent pool, had proved entirely futile. After receiving Chick's letter, however, both knew that they need not search farther.

At precisely eleven o'clock that morning, a cadaverous-looking man with a full beard mounted to the third floor of the Ascott House and knocked on the door of room 96.

The man was, of course—Nick Carter.

A man in the room responded.

"Come in!"

Nick entered and stood face to face with—Nate Herrick.

The greeting that passed between them was consistent with the circumstances already set forth.

"Mr. Herrick?" said Nick inquiringly.

"That is my name," bowed Herrick.

"And this," said Nick, producing half of a torn card, "should tell you my name."

Herrick took the slip of pasteboard and compared it with a piece drawn from his pocket.

"It does," he replied, smiling. "You are Mr. Gideon Tobey, of Bridgeport."

"The same," bowed Nick.

"Sit down, Mr. Tobey. Will you smoke?"

"I never smoke, thank you."

"Ah!" Herrick murmured, still smiling. "I admire men without vices. That is probably because I have so many of my own."

"Quite likely," Nick allowed dryly.

Herrick laughed, as if the retort really amused him, and then he again waved his visitor to a chair.

"Now, Mr. Tobey," he said affably, after they were seated, "you probably wonder why I insisted upon your seeing me in New York, instead of Bridgeport. I will tell you why."

"As you will," said Nick attentively.

None could have realized more keenly that he was playing a delicate game, that of assuming the character of a man about whose business he knew comparatively little. But Nick had taken the cue Chick had given him, and he was resolved not only to learn the details of the contemplated crime, but also to prevent it and make a sure case against the notorious gang of criminals of which this man Herrick was the chief.

"I will tell you why," Herrick repeated. "I make it a point, Mr. Tobey, never to be needlessly seen in a city in which I intend to commit a robbery. I am speaking plainly, you see, for we both must presently do so, as you know."

"Certainly," said Nick. "Plain speech is the best."

"I think so," said Herrick. "I believe in being perfectly straightforward with all men—except, of course, when I might jeopardize my own interests."

"That is a wise qualification."

"I thought you would appreciate it. There is still another reason, Mr. Tobey."

"Yes?"

"I am fighting very shy of a certain man in this city, and I'm not at all sure that he does not suspect that I have interests in Bridgeport. If so, which is only a guess on my part, he might have some one watching for me. That is the other reason. I refer to a very disagreeable and persistent detective by the name of Carter—Nick Carter."

"I have heard of him," said Nick.

"No doubt. There are very few people of the present generation to whom his name is not familiar. Take a tip from me, Tobey, and avoid him."

"I'll try to, Mr. Herrick, since you advise it."

"By all means, Tobey, avoid him," Herrick repeated. "He is wicked, infernally wicked, when he makes a mark of one. I would rather have the devil after me—as I frankly admit that he is, and likely to get me. But better the devil than Nick Carter."

"I'll bear it in mind," said the detective.

"Do—constantly in mind," Herrick impressively advised. "Now, Mr. Tobey, about our own little business. It will take us only a short time, I'm sure, to come to an understanding."

"I hope so, Mr. Herrick," Nick rejoined. "Will you proceed, or shall I—"

"Oh, I will do the talking—since I and my friends must do the job," Herrick interrupted pleasantly. "You are, I am told, somewhat short in your accounts as cashier of the Acme Manufacturing Company. There is a deficit in your cash. It is cleverly covered up, of course, Tobey, but sooner or later it must leak out—unless we can prevent it."

"That is why I am here, Mr. Herrick."

"To take steps to prevent it?"

"Certainly."

"I think we shall succeed, Mr. Tobey, succeed admirably."

"I am glad to hear you say so."

The expression on Nick's cadaverous, cleverly disguised face denoted that he really meant what he said.

"The scheme is, in fact, a very simple one," Herrick proceeded, as coolly as if he was discussing the price of ice. "The pay roll of your corporation requires how much cash, Tobey, in round numbers?"

"About thirty thousand dollars," said Nick. "We employ eleven hundred hands."

"So I have been told. Your pay day is Saturday, I also have been informed."

"Yes."

"The cash is brought to your office about ten o'clock on Saturday morning, I understand, from one of the banks. It is always contained in two leather bags belonging in your office. You have the handling of them after their arrival, and attend to the distribution of the money."

"That is perfectly correct," said Nick.

He now knew perfectly well that Mollie Lane, employed in the same office with Tobey, was Herrick's informer, and he saw plainly enough the contemplated project—precisely as it was set forth by the crook a moment later.

"Correct, of course," said Herrick. "Now, Mr. Tobey, if those two bags can be stolen by a gang with which you

are not suspected of having any relations, and if four thousand dollars are subsequently given secretly to you, you can square yourself with the corporation, and no man will ever suspect your embezzlement. Do you wish to become a party in this scheme?"

"I do—if it can be successfully carried out."

"It can be easily carried out."

"I am here to receive your instructions, then," said Nick.

"Very good," Herrick replied, more earnestly. "Now, Mr. Tobey, note me carefully. These instructions must be followed to the letter."

"They shall be."

"To-morrow morning, then, you must plan to have both bags of cash brought to your office just before the customary hour, ten o'clock."

"I will do so," said Nick.

"They must be there at precisely ten. Without delay, mind you, for it is then that I shall commit the theft."

"There will be no failure. The bags shall be there."

"Very good," Herrick said again. "Now, Mr. Tobey, I know all about your office and who is employed in it. There are four men and five girls."

"That is true."

"One more word about the bags," said Herrick. "They must not be opened, nor unstrapped, after being brought to your office. Instead of placing them in the vault, moreover, you must put them under your desk in the cage you occupy."

"I will do so."

"Now follow me."

"I am all attention."

"About three minutes before ten I will enter the office in disguise. I will carry in each hand a handkerchief, however, that you may readily recognize me."

"I shall be watching."

"Immediately after I enter, Mr. Tobey, you must step out of your cage and leave the door ajar. Go into the vault directly back of it, as if to get something, and do not come out until you hear the cries and commands of my confederates. They will enter about two minutes after me, from a touring car in which they will arrive and escape—with the money."

"You have made it perfectly plain," said Nick. "It appears, I confess, entirely feasible."

"Oh!" Herrick exclaimed quietly, with a shrug. "There is no question as to its feasibility, or its success—if you do your part, Mr. Tobey."

"I shall do my part, Mr. Herrick, and do it well," Nick replied, with a significance far too subtle for his hearer to appreciate.

CHAPTER IX.

CHICK UNMASKED.

There was very little doing for Chick Carter during Friday, when the supposed Gideon Tobey held his conference with Nate Herrick in New York.

The five men, as well as the Lane couple and Nell Garside, remained in or around the house throughout the day, though Mollie went to work as usual. She returned early in the afternoon, however, and stated that Gideon Tobey was then in New York, and also complacently announced that she had thrown up her job.

The former convinced the gang that their plans were working out admirably, and both suited Chick Carter to the letter.

Twice during the day he saw Lane's wife go up a rear stairway with a tray of food, which confirmed his suspicion that Lora Langham was confined in an upper room of the house. He would have been glad to relieve her by some word or sign, but he had no opportunity without peril to his far more important designs.

Saturday morning brought rapid changes in the situation, however, some of which no mortal man could have anticipated.

Coming out of the dining room about nine o'clock, Chick heard Nell Garside talking in the parlor, and then a man's voice, which he instantly recognized.

"By thunder, Herrick is here!" flashed through his mind while he paused to listen.

He was right. Herrick had arrived at the crossroad by trolley and had just entered the house. The first words Nell uttered, in accents of jealous hatred and resentment, told Chick that she had not seen Herrick since the Langham holdup.

"Wasn't it enough to take her jewels, without taking her and sending her here?" she was demanding. "I know why you did it. You still love her—that's why! But I'll not stand for it."

"Nonsense!" Herrick growled, quite angrily. "What else could I do?"

"What else?"

"I had to abduct her. My goggles fell off when I struck her father down, and she instantly recognized me. What was I to do? I couldn't leave her at liberty and let her expose me. I had to abduct her, or kill her."

"I'll kill her, unless you dispose of her," Nell viciously declared.

"I'll dispose of her, all right," Herrick forcibly assured her. "It shall be done this very day, but it cannot be done at once. The job for which I have come here must be done in less than an hour."

"You've seen Tobey?" Nell inquired, with her resentment evidently appeased.

"Yes, of course."

"In New York?"

"In the Ascott House, as arranged. You've seen him, haven't you?"

"Yes. A cadaverous, bearded man——"

"That's the man," Herrick interrupted impatiently. "He brought the torn card, as directed, and I've had a look at him through his office window this morning. It's all planned, Nell, and he is there and onto his part of the job."

"If he is, I'll eat my hat," thought Chick, who knew that Nick must be the man seen in the office of the Acme Manufacturing Company. "I made it plain enough, all right, and Nick is there to handle that end of our work. If I am left here, by Jove, as now appears probable, I'll soon contrive to get away with Miss Langham."

That he would not have long to wait appeared in Herrick's next words.

"Where is Payson?" he demanded hurriedly. "I must be back in town before ten. Are the boys ready for the job?"

"They are getting ready," Nell quickly assured him. "They are going to use the Dexter car in which they came

here Thursday night. It's out in the shed. They are out there. Come with me."

Chick slipped out of sight and crept up the back stairs. In the stir and excitement attending Herrick's brief visit, the new member of the gang was entirely forgotten until after the latter's departure.

From various vantage points, nevertheless, Chick viewed the doings of the gang during the next ten minutes. In a group near one of the open sheds, from which a huge touring car already had been run out, the six men held an earnest conference, Herrick doing most of the talking and giving his confederates the instructions they were to follow.

Chick kept out of sight all the while, and, with much satisfaction, saw Herrick finally hasten away to catch a return trolley car to town, there to do his part of the work agreed upon.

Chick then sauntered around from the front of the house and joined the gang, all of whom were clad in leather jackets and heavily armed with revolvers.

"I reckon there's something doing, Payson," he said carelessly.

"Yes, but you're not in it this time, Jerry," Payson replied.

"That's up to you," said Chick indifferently. "I'll be ready any old time I'm wanted."

"Your turn will come a little later."

"The sooner the better."

"This job was all planned, you see, before you showed up. There's no room for you in it, though you'll get a share of the coin."

"The lion's share," thought Chick, with grim satisfaction; then aloud: "When is it coming off?"

"At ten o'clock," said Payson. "We shall leave in twenty minutes."

Chick hung around and observed their careful preparations, and was with the Lanes in front of the house when the gang departed, with Payson at the wheel.

"Good luck!" Jim Lane shouted, as the car swerved sharply into the road.

"We don't bank on luck," Jerry shouted back to him. "It's guns for ours, not luck."

Then the car and the gang were gone.

Jim Lane headed around the house to close the shed door.

His wife and daughter, followed by Nell Garside, went to the dining room to clear the breakfast table.

None of them appeared to have any interest in the immediate doings of the detective.

In view of the general crisis of affairs, Chick was not in a mood to lose any time. He determined to take the opportunity presented. He saw the three women disappear into the dining room, then he darted noiselessly up the front stairs. Passing through the hall, he mounted a rear flight and reached the upper floor.

A closed door near the head of the stairs met his gaze. He listened for a moment, heard a low, half-choked moan from within, and then caught sight of a key hanging on a nail in the near wall. Seizing it, he thrust it into the lock and opened the door.

The scene within confirmed his suspicion. Secured to a bed, with a bandage tied over her mouth, lay Loretta Langham, still clad in the elaborate costume she had worn to the Polk reception three nights before. Her face was ghastly and haggard, and her eyes were turned with a look of terrible fear toward the door.

It was not in Chick Carter's nature to leave her in suspense. Impulsively removing his disguise, knowing he could quickly replace it if he heard any one coming, he ran to the side of the bed and began to release the girl.

"The scurvy devils!" he cried through his teeth. "You know me, Miss Langham. Fear nothing any longer. I'll soon have you out of this place."

"Oh, Mr. Carter—Mr. Carter!" she moaned, yet in accents of indescribable relief, when he tore the bandage from her mouth. "I am found—saved! Oh, it is more than I have dared hope!"

"Hush!"

"Tell me—my father! Was he shot, or——"

"Wait! Be quiet!"

Chick cautioned her more sharply. Her frantic utterances alarmed him. He thought he heard, too, a sound like the creaking of a stair. He left her rising from the bed and darted to the door.

A piercing scream greeted him the instant he appeared on the threshold, a scream of fury that language could not describe.

Nell Garside, with a revolver in her hand, was part way up the stairs. She recognized Chick on the instant, and as quickly seemed to grasp the entire situation, the stratagem with which she had been duped, the course he probably had shaped, and the danger that menaced the gang then on their way to commit the robbery.

"You devil!" she yelled. "I know you now!"

She fired while she spoke, and the bullet whizzed by the detective's ear.

Chick leaped back into the room and crouched behind the doorjamb, drawing his revolver. He was under a disadvantage, however, for he knew that the desperate woman could get a line on him before he could use his own weapon.

Crouching on the stairs, with her revolver ready and her eyes fixed upon the open door, she was shrieking at the top of her lungs:

"Jim—Jim—Jim! Listen to me—listen!"

A roar came from the floor below.

"What's up? Who fired——"

"Listen!" Nell shrieked, interrupting. "This Gilman is one of the Carters. I've got him cornered in the woman's room. The gang is in danger. Tobey must have been arrested. The man taking his place in the Acme office must be Nick Carter."

"The h—l you say!" roared Lane, from below.

"The phone—get next to the phone!" Nell screamed. "Head off the gang at the drug-store corner. Tell the clerk to stop them, to tell them a man named Carter has Tobey's job. They'll understand. Tell him they must head off Herrick before he enters the Acme office. Make it clear—make it clear! It's their only hope."

"Leave it to me," Lane yelled. "Keep that rat cornered, Nell, and leave it to me."

Gritting his teeth, Chick made another attempt to get a line on the woman.

A bullet grazed his hair.

"You lie low, blast you!" Nell shrieked. "Show your head again and I'll not miss you!"

"But you'll come no nearer, nor any one else," Chick retorted. "I've got that much on you, at least."

CHAPTER X.

A CLOSE CALL.

Nick Carter, in company with Patsy Garvan and Danny, left New York during Friday night in the detective's sixty-horse-power touring car, and were in Bridgeport early Saturday morning.

Nick then wore the disguise in which he had met Nate Herrick, and the steps he took that morning, steps taken without incurring any publicity, were well calculated to successfully meet the approaching situation.

Between nine and ten o'clock, Nick was filling Tobey's position in the office of the Acme Company, the other officials of which had been informed of all of the circumstances.

Instead of the customary clerks, their desk chairs were occupied by three policemen in plain clothes, with revolvers ready for instant use.

The girls who worked in the office occupied an adjoining room.

Thirty yards west of the entrance to the building and on the opposite side of the street, stood Nick's fast touring car, with Danny at the wheel and Patsy and the Bridgeport chief, both in disguise, apparently lounging lazily in the tonneau. They were there to overtake the driver of the bandit car, if he should seek safety in flight.

Such was the situation in and out of the Acme office just before ten o'clock that Saturday morning.

It was Nick's intention to arrest Herrick immediately after he entered, and then await the coming of his confederates, nailing them in the act of attempting the holdup. The precautions that had been taken seemed amply adequate, therefore, to cover any contingencies that might arise.

At precisely five minutes before ten, carrying a handkerchief in each hand, his features carefully disguised, Nate Herrick approached the entrance to the Acme building and was about to mount the low flight of steps.

"Here he comes," said Nick calmly, who could see the sidewalk fronting the outer door.

Nate Herrick, however, did not enter.

From the near distance came the rumbling of a powerful motor. He swung round like a flash, thinking his confederates were too early, and he beheld the huge Dexter car tearing through the street at full speed.

"Good God!" he muttered. "They'll queer the whole business."

The scowl on his face turned even darker, however, when he heard Gerry's warning yells as the car began to slow down.

"Lon—Lon—hold on!" he shouted, instead of calling Herrick by his true name. "Don't go in! Don't go in there! We've been fooled—bunkoed! Tobey has been arrested. The man you saw in there was Nick Carter. He's in there now, waiting for you, and for us. Tumble in here—tumble in, man, for God's sake, or we'll all be caught!"

The rushing car had swerved to the curbing while Gerry was frantically uttering the above cries.

Herrick needed only one glance at the white faces of the gang to know that the game had in some way miscarried, and to realize that their safety depended upon instant flight. He leaped into the tonneau before the last word was said, and heard a gasping cry of relief from his companions.

Payson banged the clutch, and the car leaped away like a grayhound, heading out of the city.

Nick Carter was not idle while these episodes transpired, nor was Patsy Garvan and Danny.

Nick saw at a glance that something had gone wrong, and his first thought was of Chick, and that his subterfuge had been discovered. He did not utter a word, but dashed out at top speed to the sidewalk.

In the meantime, seeing what was taking place, Patsy Garvan was hit with the same misgivings. Half starting from his seat, he cried sharply:

"By thunder, chief, there's the gang! The trick is off, and they're bolting. Lively, Danny! There's Nick just coming out. Over that way, and pick him up, and then we'll be after them."

Danny saw how things had turned, as well as Patsy. He already had the car under way. He shot it back of a passing wagon and across the street, and in another moment Nick was in the seat beside him.

"After them, Danny," said he, with perfect composure. "They have only a hundred yards on us. You can run them down in less than a mile."

"I'll do it, too, chief," Danny cried, between his teeth.

The building occupied by the Acme Manufacturing Company was near an outskirt of the city, and within half a minute both flying automobiles were tearing by the last scattered shops and dwellings and entering upon a long stretch of clear road making through a comparatively open country, leaving behind them a cloud of dust and hundreds of staring people who had witnessed the scenes described.

"Great Scott!" exclaimed the Bridgeport chief. "What's gone wrong, Nick?"

"Don't question," Nick replied, without turning. "The first thing is to get those fellows."

"They're the bandits?"

"Surely."

"But——"

"Crouch a little, chief. There'll be bullets flying in half a minute."

Nick drew his revolver while speaking, and his prediction was speedily verified.

One of the bandits swung round in the tonneau and fired, and the bullet from his revolver sang above the detective's heads.

"That was Phil Gerry," said Nick complacently. "I'll see that he gets the limit for that. Keep off to the left, Danny, to avoid their dust. That bothers me more than their bullets. H'm, there's another—and still another."

"May I shoot, chief?" cried Patsy excitedly. "Gee! we'll be hit by chance, if nothing else."

"No, don't shoot yet," said Nick. "I'll fix them presently."

"Can't you puncture one of their tires?"

"That's what I shall try to do. A bit more to the left, Danny, if you can."

"I can, chief."

"Keep your eye on the road. Don't mind what I'm doing."

Danny's face was as hard set as stone, his nerves and muscles like steel, under the sixty-mile clip they were going.

"I'm watching, chief," he said simply.

They then were within fifty yards of the bandit car.

A fusillade of shots flew over their heads.

Nick's revolver rose a little from his knee.

"Keep your eye on that car, now, Danny, in case it swerves or turns turtle," he said, a bit more sternly. "Be ready to avoid it, and ready with your brake."

"I'm watching, chief. I'm ready."

Nick crouched a little lower, watching the swirling dust. He had, after a moment, a clear view of the fleeing car. His revolver rose and fell like a flash, as he took lightning-like aim.

Bang!

Nick fired only once.

The report of his weapon was mingled with another report, that of a bursting tire, as his bullet tore through the shoe and inner tube.

The effect was disastrous. One side of the flying car rose a foot from the road. It ran on two wheels some twenty yards, all in the thousandth part of a second, and then, in spite of Payson's efforts to guide it, it shot to one side, struck a low embankment, then turned like an acrobat, wheels up in the road.

Danny threw the emergency break with might and main.

Nick's car was upon the spot in the time required to think of it, and the two detectives, with drawn revolvers, were leaping to the ground.

There was no need for weapons just then, however.

Three of the bandits were lying unconscious on the embankment.

Payson was under the car, in dying condition.

Gerry and Nate Herrick, both bleeding and too dazed to know what had occurred, were sitting in the dusty road.

"It's as well to take them thus, perhaps, as any other way," said Nick grimly.

"We've got them, all right," said Patsy. "What next, chief?"

"You and Danny can look after them," Nick hurriedly replied. "I must see what has befallen Chick. I'll take the chief with me to show me the way. Disarm these rascals, then watch them till I can send the police wagon. It won't be long."

"Leave them to us," said Patsy.

Half a minute later, Nick and the Bridgeport chief were speeding back to the city, where the necessary steps were quickly taken. Then, with three additional officers, a quick run was made to the road house, where Nick arrived in less than half an hour after the departure of the bandit car.

They found the situation still unsettled, Chick cornered in the room with Lora Langham, but also holding at bay Nell Garside and the Lanes. The arrival of the police so quickly had not been thought of, and they were in the house and the crooks in custody in a very few moments.

At noon that day, after the smoke had cleared away, it was found that two of the gang had been killed by the overturning of the car, two of them seriously injured, and only Herrick and Gerry in shape to be put in jail, where they were promptly landed, with the prisoners from the road house.

It would seem like a waste of time to refer at length to the gratitude of those for whom the Carters had done this masterful work, and relieved the community of the gang that so long had terrorized it. That such gratitude was felt and the service appreciated, however, as well as liberally rewarded, goes without saying.

Nick Carter's deductions, as already set forth, had been correct from the beginning.

THE END.

"The Last Call; or, Nick Carter's Patchwork Problem," is a sequel to the story that you have just read. It will be found in the next issue of this weekly, No. 63, out November 22d. The rare deductive ability of the great detective, combined with a wonderful display of bravery and iron nerve, is graphically portrayed in this absorbing narrative.

CALLED DOWN;

Or, Steve Manley in a Desperate Strait.

By ALDEN F. BRADSHAW.

CHAPTER VIII.

WHEN KNAVES FALL OUT.

Ten minutes later the chamber was in darkness, and Sidney Barrows and his wife were seated in the library, with fear pictured in their pale and doubtful faces, and with their ears strained for any sound that might come from below.

Below was the cellar of the house.

It was then lighted by an oil lamp placed on the stairs.

Inanimate on the hard cement floor lay Steve Manley, with his arms bound at either side.

Above him, grim, angular, with a face like that of a demon who feared his designs to have been perverted, stood Michael Kirk, gazing searchingly about.

He was looking for a place in which to conceal the form on the floor, lest other officers should appear there in search of him.

Suddenly the furnace met his evil eyes. It was not the modern portable kind, but was a huge brick affair, built up against the foundation wall of the house, and reaching to the floor above.

On one side a square iron door in the brickwork gave admission to the air chamber, making the firepot accessible in case repairs were needed. The door was about two feet square, and about the same distance above the floor.

"Fool me, will you?" muttered Kirk, hastening to open the iron door and look into the tomblike place by the light of a match.

"Fool me, eh? You'll not find it so easy to fool Michael Kirk, once his blood is up. Queer my game, will he? Queer my game before I can pull it off? No, no, I guess not! Not if his life has to be taken, shall he do that! I warned you! I warned you! Now pay the price for meddling with Michael Kirk, you infernal cub!"

Maintaining this string of muttered malediction, and with a quick, nervous energy, which in such time and place and deed gave him the aspect of a madman, he hurriedly raised Steve from the floor, thrust him brutally through the narrow aperture, and dropped him bodily to the floor of the air chamber of the furnace.

Then he closed the iron door, and secured it against the possibility of escape in that direction.

"Fool me, will you!" he again muttered viciously, shaking his fist at his own work. "I'll teach you to meddle with Michael Kirk. I warned you! Now pay the price!"

Then he quickly crossed the cellar, taking the light from the stairs, and hastened to rejoin his two confederates in the library.

"What have you done?" Barrows tremulously demanded, the moment Kirk entered.

"Shoved him into the furnace air chamber, where he may live or die, as he likes!" cried Kirk, with a mingled leer and scowl.

But the evil satisfaction pictured in this scoundrel's haggard face had no reflection in the countenance of Josie Barrows. Her handsome face was as pale as his, more pale, indeed; but the look in her brilliant eyes, the knitting of her arched brows, and the unusual firmness of her lips, indicated the uprising of a resentment within. Half an eye might have seen that her will and courage were double those of the pale, delicate husband from beside whom she suddenly arose.

"Look here, Mr. Kirk!" she cried, with suppressed vehemence; "you've not killed that detective, have you?"

She looked and spoke much as when she called down Steve Manley a half hour before, and it was plain that she felt no need of a weapon in calling down the miscreant she now confronted.

"It's not likely I've killed him," returned Kirk, frowning darkly; "but suppose I had?"

"We will suppose nothing of the kind!" cried the woman. "Nor shall anything of the kind occur. I'll have you know we are not lending ourselves to murder, nor running our necks into a hangman's noose."

"Is that so?"

"And, furthermore, we have about made up our minds to wash our hands of this other affair."

"That's easier said than done, since it has gone so far, and your hands already are so badly soiled," retorted Kirk, with malicious significance.

Yet the determination she had expressed evidently affected him unpleasantly.

"It can be done easily enough, Michael Kirk, if we so decide."

"But you'll not do it."

"I'm not so sure of that."

"Why this sudden change, may I ask?" snarled Kirk, throwing himself into a chair.

"Because the scheme now looks like a probable failure, that's why! And we had much better escape with a whole skin while there is time," said Josie sharply.

"Why do you say that?" cried Kirk angrily.

"You yourself have said that Radcliff refuses to consider your offer."

"He'll reconsider that refusal."

"I have my doubts of it."

"Well, I have not!" Kirk forcibly persisted. "Good heavens, do you think that man will suffer a trial and conviction, rather than make terms with me which would result in his release and exoneration? You're mad!"

"I know only what you have this evening told——"

"It don't matter what I have told," the lawyer sharply interrupted. "I know what I am about. I yet shall bring Radcliff to terms. Are you fools enough to let this venture fail at his late hour, after putting months and months into it? Our plans——"

"Don't call them our plans!" cried Josie Barrows, with sudden vehemence. "The design never was ours. It was yours alone."

"You were ready enough to coöperate in it, both of you," retorted Kirk.

"But chiefly because you pictured it as being far more feasible than it has proved, and that by it a fortune could easily be secured."

"And so it may be, if you two don't go to pieces at the last moment."

"What does Radcliff say about it?" demanded Josie.

"That's what I came here to tell you. He——" and Kirk glanced contemptuously at the white face of Sidney Barrows; "he showed the white feather the moment I told him, and insisted that I should come here and consult with you. I'd have taken this chance of being seen here for no other reason."

"Never mind all that. What does Radcliff say?"

"He demands to know in precisely what way I propose to save him."

"You cannot tell him that!"

"I know that without your saying so," snarled Kirk.

"What can you do about it?"

"Beat about the bush, of course, until I can bring him to my own terms."

"But I understood that he refuses even to consider the price."

"I admit that we may have to shade the figure."

"To what?"

"To one-half of the original."

"That is decidedly broad shading," declared the girl, with a curl of her thin lips.

"Better a half loaf than none," growled Kirk.

"What have you told him?"

"I told him this morning that I certainly could clear him."

"What did he say to that?"

"He demanded to know in what way?"

"You did not tell him?"

"I told him I could not and would not inform him in what way, but that I would guarantee to accomplish it for the price."

"Fifty thousand dollars?"

"Precisely."

"Did he show any signs of yielding?"

"Decidedly so! I now feel certain that, before he will take the chances of trial and conviction, he will accept my terms. With the money safe in hand, the rest will be easy."

"Why easy?"

"What a question!" cried Kirk, with a snarl of contempt. "If the missing girl is produced, won't that end it?"

"So far as Radcliff is concerned—yes!" snapped Josie, with bitter asperity. "But how about us?"

"You will not be liable!" cried Kirk. "They cannot prove a conspiracy. They cannot show that Belle West has not actually been away from here, nor that she lies in stating that she knew absolutely nothing of this report of her murder, and the arrest of Radcliff."

"I am not so sure of it, after what has happened here to-night."

"Well, I am sure of it, and I know much more about the possibilities involved than you do," Kirk sharply replied. "Once we get the money, all you two will need to do is to move out of Pennville with your share of the fortune, and within a year the whole thing will have blown over, and we all will be so much the winners. Further-

more, you cannot give up the scheme at this stage; for, if you do that, Radcliff is sure to go under, unless you expose the whole thing. You have no resource but to play the game out to a finish."

"I don't feel so easy about it, since I know O'Mara's suspicions are aroused," said Josie, still doubtfully shaking her head.

"Suspicion!" exclaimed Kirk contemptuously. "Suspicion don't convict anybody. I told you in the beginning that we should have to face suspicion, both before and after the design had been executed."

"All that may be true."

"I know it is true."

"Yet O'Mara may advise Radcliff not to yield to your demand, if the chief suspects there has been some conspiracy in operation."

"I don't care what he suspects, providing that he can prove nothing!" cried Kirk, with an ugly display of impatience.

"Whatever his suspicions are," he continued, "he cannot stop the working of the law, and Radcliff will surely be brought to trial unless the police can produce sufficient tangible evidence to warrant a stay of proceedings. Suspicion won't do that, you can bet on that, and it rests with us to prevent any discovery of the actual case. That's why I insist that that cub in the cellar must not escape us."

"I won't see him killed!" Barrows now cried sharply. "I did not agree to commit any such crime as that, and I will not be a party to it."

"Nor I!" added Josie firmly. "I would not have shot him to-night, even if he had walked straight by me and out of the house. But I gave him a strong enough bluff that I would."

A grim mingling of disdain and disapproval showed in Kirk's sullen features.

"You two make me tired," he growled impatiently. "You were not cut out to do this job, despite that you consented to it."

"I'll not stand for murder!" Barrows again declared, with a decisive shake of his head.

"There'll be no need of it!" cried Kirk. "All we require to do is to keep the fellow under cover until we can drive Radcliff to the wall. That should be accomplished within a week. His trial will not be postponed, and I know well enough that he will weaken before then. You two must pull yourselves together, and put up a front the same as you have been doing, and the affair yet will terminate in our favor. I know what I am about. And I know Radcliff will weaken before—where are you going?"

Barrows had risen to his feet, and was about to leave the room.

"Not far!" he turned and said curtly. "What's the matter with you, that I cannot move without first asking your permission?"

"Nothing's the matter with me; it's your own infernally bad disposition."

"Well, I'll admit I'm tired of being bossed by you."

"Yet you might answer a civil question."

"I am going to the kitchen for water, if you need to know," said Barrows, leaving the room with a frown on his delicate white face.

But he did not go to the kitchen for water.

He rather went for the lamp which Michael Kirk had brought up from the cellar, and left lighted on the kitchen table.

The moment he was alone, moreover, he hastened his steps. The fears which so long had been showing in his face could no longer suffer inaction.

It was fear lest Michael Kirk had indeed killed Steve Manley, despite his denial, or that the latter might helplessly die there in the house. And Sidney Barrows, unable to endure the suspense of his uncertainty, had started for the cellar to make sure of what had occurred.

With the lamp in his tremulous hand, with his face pale with dread, he opened the cellar door and descended the stairs.

The door swung to and closed behind him.

CHAPTER IX.

HOW STEVE SOLVED THE MYSTERY.

Two or three blows from a man's fist are not sufficient to still the vitality of a sturdy boy, and the "infernal cub," so-called, gradually came to himself.

When he fairly regained consciousness, Steve's first thought was of what had occurred, and then of his present condition and location.

Neither were at all to his fancy.

"I'm in a mighty tight place, wherever it is!" he said to himself. "But the fobl that tied these lines needs to take a few lessons in making knots!"

As a matter of fact, Michael Kirk had not been particular in securing the young detective. That Steve could possibly escape from his place of confinement had seemed utterly impossible.

But Steve was a slippery youngster, as Kirk was destined to discover.

It required only a few minutes for him to free his arms, and then he waited and listened. Through the furnace pipes he could faintly hear the sound of voices.

"They sound from overhead," he said to himself. "The crooks are still up, but what hole is this I'm in? It's like being in a coffin."

His confines were narrow, indeed, and only by wriggling about could he move at all.

"The floor and walls are of stone, and here's an iron door," he muttered, feeling about with his hands. "But what the deuce is this big, round thing?"

Then another peculiar feature of the place took his attention.

From some quarter below him, and apparently coming through the floor itself, there was a steady draft of air. Wriggling below the "round thing," he reached down and found an opening in the floor, about two feet square. It was through this that the draft came; and upon making this discovery, Steve instantly guessed the truth.

"I'll take my oath! I am in the air chamber of the furnace!" he exclaimed, under his breath. "It's plain enough now. And this big round thing is the firepot. Whew! All I've got to say is they took a curious place to hide me in. I hope they won't start a furnace fire."

He was not idle while thus communing. He made an effort to force the iron door, and speedily found that to be impossible.

Then another thought struck him, giving him a thrill by the possibility suggested.

"The air box!" he muttered. "This draft must make in from out-of-doors, and through a cellar window. The tun-

nel must run under the cellar floor and up to the window. I wonder how long it is, and how big."

With Steve Manley, to wonder was to act. Turning over upon his stomach, he worked himself closer to the aperture in the floor, and reached down and into it. It was fully two feet square, and about six inches below the cellar floor.

"Oh, I don't know! I believe I can crawl through it," Steve said to himself, in some excitement. "It'll be a deuce of a fix, though, if I get in there and cannot get out. I never can work back here feet first.

"But it must lead out to a window, or to an opening in the cellar air box," he further reasoned. "Not fool him, eh! Just watch me! I'll take the chance!"

In considerable excitement now, he worked himself through the intense darkness, and thrust his head and shoulders into the narrow tunnel. He found the lower surface to be of earth and stone, and that he could by a strenuous effort wriggle down to it. Meantime the draft was blowing steadily in his face.

"It comes from a window, right enough!" he cried softly. "And here goes!"

Then he wriggled in and down, and after quite a good many contortions he found himself flat on his face in the tunnel, and under the cellar floor.

To wriggle along like a snake was not difficult, despite that the quarters were narrow; and, at the end of five minutes, Steve had covered, as nearly as he could judge the distance, about fifteen feet.

Then the course of the tunnel turned upward, and instead of the earthly dampness, Steve now could smell the odor of dry wood, and the sweetness of the night air.

"I'm near the end of it," he muttered hopefully. "This woodwork must be the air box in the cellar, and above that is the window."

Now, turning upon his back, he gradually worked on and upward, till he sat squarely on the earth, and within the vertical air box.

"Hello!" he suddenly muttered.

In feeling over the wooden surface directly in front of him he suddenly had discovered that a portion of it yielded slightly under the pressure of his hands.

"It's the door of the air box, the trap that opens into the cellar!" he decided. "And it's a hundred to one that only a wooden button secures it. If I'm right, I'll settle that very quickly."

Fishing out his knife, he thrust the blade through a crack where the partition yielded, and almost immediately verified his belief. The blade came in contact with the button; and the latter, old and loose on its screw, easily yielded to his pressure.

In another moment Steve had softly raised the trap, which swung down on hinges, and discovered that he now had an easy access to the cellar floor. More delighted than relieved, despite the desperate chance he had taken, the young detective crawled out through the trap and softly closed it behind him.

He barely had gained the cellar, however, before he heard the sound of approaching feet overhead, and saw the gleam of a light at the top of the stairs.

Sidney Barrows was at that moment descending.

Steve looked about for a hiding place, and darted behind a corner of the coalbin.

White and trembling, Barrows came with nervous tread down the stairs and placed the lamp on a box near by.

Without so much as a glance around the cellar, he hastened to approach the furnace and remove a length of joist, with which Michael Kirk had secured the iron door in one side of the brick structure.

Then Barrows lighted a match, and, opening the door, thrust his head into the aperture.

Moving as quickly and as silently as a cat, for he still was shoeless, Steve crossed the cellar with the intention of securing him then and there.

At the same moment when Barrows, startled at not finding what he expected, quickly withdrew his head and rose erect, Steve caught him from behind and clapped one hand over the young man's mouth.

And then Steve Manley was more surprised than ever before in all his life.

The moment his arm closed around Barrows the truth broke like a sudden revelation upon the young detective's mind.

For the slight, yielding form he so forcibly had seized was not that of a man—but that of a girl!

"Good God!" gasped Steve, still holding her fast. "You're a girl! By thunder, you're Belle West!"

There was little need for him to forcibly attempt to stifle any cry that she might have attempted to make; for, with the sound of Steve's words in her ear, and with this realization of her inevitable exposure, the girl—for she was indeed Belle West—instantly ceased struggling, and stood like one crushed and humiliated, with her head sunk on her breast.

But Steve was not taking chances of any further duplicity. He had felt the outline of the revolver the girl still carried, and suddenly reaching down, he drew it from her pocket. Then he removed his hand from over her mouth, commanding sternly:

"Don't speak above a whisper!"

"You need not fear!" she exclaimed, almost with a sob; and she raised to his a pair of eyes that were burning painfully, and cheeks that were crimson with shame. "What use for me to make an outcry—now!"

"Do you admit that you are Belle West?" demanded Steve sternly.

"What good would it do me to deny it, after this?" she asked, with drooping head.

"None at all," said Steve curtly. "Who is upstairs?"

"If I refuse——"

"You will not refuse! Tell me who is upstairs!"

"Michael Kirk and my sister."

"Then your fake marriage was only part of the game?"

"I may as well admit that, also."

"Where are the two?"

"In the library."

"Hold out your hands!"

The girl, humbled beyond description, obeyed him without lifting her head; and within a minute Steve had her tied hand and foot with the line by which he himself had been secured.

Then he left her sitting on the cellar stairs, and stole softly up to the hall above.

As he drew near the library the voice of Michael Kirk reached his ears.

"You will do what I command in this affair, Josie!" he was saying, in his harsh and sinister fashion. "It has gone too far for any of us to turn back. If you think I now will give it up because of that infernal boy, you

are mistaken. He is safe enough where he is until morning, and then——"

"And then, Mr. Michael Kirk, you will occupy a cell in the city prison, and find that I again have fooled you!" interrupted Steve.

At the same moment he strode straight into the room and to the open window, and fired two shots with startling reports upon the still, night air, then swung sharply around and aimed the weapon point-blank at the nonplused lawyer's head.

"A move from either one of you will bring another shot, and one that may kill!" he cried, in ringing tones. "If you wish to live, Michael Kirk, you will sit where you are, and order Josie West to do likewise."

Kirk's jaw had fallen like that of a dead man, and Josie West sat half fainting in her chair.

Before either could recover and attempt anything desperate, even if so inclined, the helmet and face of one of the city police, who had heard the reports of the revolver, appeared at the library window.

"Come in here, officer!" cried Steve. "I have cornered a triplet of crooks, who want to talk to you. Come right through the window, and lend me a hand!"

It is quite needless to add that the officer promptly responded.

And, indeed, but little more is needed than a cursory explanation of the curious fraud which these culprits had attempted, and which Steve Manley had so cleverly exposed.

The design by which they had planned to swindle wealthy Dana Radcliff out of a fortune for themselves may be briefly stated. It had originated with Kirk, and by him the two West girls, whose characters were afterward shown to be a little shady, had been led to coöperate in the scheme.

For nearly a year Belle West had played a dual character without being suspected, that of Barrows and her own, passing a portion of the time at home and a part in the genuine employment of a sewing-machine agent. In the latter character she had visited her own home, and even the neighbors did not recognize her, nor suspect that she was not a young man attentive to Josie West.

Meantime, as Belle West, she had craftily won the attentions of Radcliff, and led him to his own undoing; the three confederates believing that, if they could involve Radcliff as described, they could force him to pay liberally to escape.

On the night of the crime, both Kirk and Josie were operating with Belle, and the latter's altercation with Radcliff and her departure from his car were but a part of the infamous scheme. She had started straight for the river after leaving him, and had been brought over to Pennville in a boat by Michael Kirk. But not until those indications of the apparent crime had been prepared which already have been pictured. That the design had been well planned and executed, appears in that it certainly would have been more or less successful but for the clever work of Chief O'Mara and young Steve Manley.

Before midnight the three culprits were safely lodged in jail, and ultimately suffered the punishment that fits the crime.

Not until next morning, however, did Chief O'Mara learn that Dana Radcliff had been released from custody, nor hear what had been accomplished by the youngest member of his efficient corps of detectives.

He did not say much to Steve Manley at the time; but a day or two later he called him into his office, and received him, with an unsealed envelope held carelessly in his hand.

"Did you send for me, sir?" Steve inquired, as he entered.

"Yes, I did," Chief O'Mara gravely nodded. "It's about that West girl affair, Steve."

"What's new?" asked Steve, with a look of surprise.

Chief O'Mara passed him the envelope, and regarded him with a rather fond expression in his smiling eyes.

"It is not a badge this time, Steve," he said genially. "It is something more substantial."

"This isn't a gold-brick game, is it?" asked Steve, with a grin.

"Not that, Steve. It's a very handsome check—from Mr. Dana Radcliff!"

Steve looked at him with a rather curious twinkle in his eyes.

"If I could only have one, Chief O'Mara," he said quickly, "I'd take the badge!"

THE END.

A PERILOUS NIGHT AT SEA.

By WILLIAM COMSTOCK.

The season on Japan was nearly at an end. Indeed it was quite at an end, though we had not yet left the whaling ground.

We say that the season is at an end when a succession of violent storms renders it impossible to lower away the boats and go in pursuit of whales.

We were about to put off for the coast of California—not the California of the present day, but a desolate country, with here and there a little hamlet of half a dozen houses, walled in as a defense against the Indians, who sometimes came down from the neighboring mountains and made dreadful havoc among the whites who lived outside the walls. On our second visit to Santa Barbara we missed a number of white men who had been killed by the Indians since our first visit, one, in particular, a large and stout Englishman, who slew sixteen Indians before they brought him to the ground.

We were about to sail for California, when a heavy gale broke loose upon us. We were immediately hove to under staysails. They soon blew away, and we drifted under bare poles. The seas were blown down flat as a marble floor, and the ship lay over on her side in one invariable position as if held in a vise.

People say that "words are nothing but wind," but I have seen the time when wind was some pumpkins, and by no means the contemptible thing which some persons would have it to be.

On this occasion little particles of water were blown with such force against our faces, or naked feet, that they pricked like pins.

The air was filled with a mist, so that we could see but a short distance from the ship. Conversation was out of the question. The mate, in the commencement of the gale, wanting to direct me to do something, came and put his mouth to my ear and screamed to the top of his voice. I could but just hear him.

The gale hummed through the cordage like one continuous note of an organ.

Night came down upon us, and the darkness was very thick.

"Is that a star rising to the windward?" shouted one of my shipmates in my ear.

I looked as well as I could in the direction which he pointed, and did, indeed, discern something through the misty darkness—a bright yellowish body. But I knew that it was no star, unless one of the orbs of space, approaching nearer than usual to our earth, had assumed larger proportions.

In a few moments I perceived that the attention of the captain and first mate was directed to this object. I could hear nothing, but I could see the captain whirling about and putting his mouth to the ear of the mate, while the latter moved also like a person in a great fright.

The helmsman, being relieved, came forward, clinging to ropes and stays, and shouted in my ear that a ship on fire was coming down upon us from the windward.

I could see nothing particularly amusing in that intelligence, for if she came down upon us, we must, of course, burn also; the flame would be blown right across our deck, right into our top hamper.

The cook was preparing a mess of fish chowder for the crew, and I hoped he would hurry it up, for if he delayed much longer it would prove a dead loss.

The bright spot over the weather beam grew larger and larger, and now another roar, differing from that of the blast, smote our ears.

I saw the captain running from man to man, and shouting in their ears. They looked aloft. Several of them ascended the rigging, slowly to be sure, but they got up after a fashion and loosed the foresail. The mate ordered us to haul aft the foresheet, taking hold of it himself, and making us understand his meaning more by gestures than by words.

The men aloft had cut the gaskets from the sail with their sheath knives, but in the same moment the wind streamed it out to leeward and tore it bodily from the yard. We saw it a moment, like a white cloud, flying away, and it was gone from our sight.

On came the roaring body of fire, reaching out its red arms toward us like some demon resolved to compel us to his embrace, though he knew that that embrace would be death.

Smoke and sparks were already rolling over us, and soon our cordage would be in a blaze.

"Lower away the boats!" shrieked the captain, in his despair.

Every man felt that such a course could be of no earthly use, for no boat could live in that gale, and if they could, there was nothing in them to sustain life, and we were more than a thousand miles from the nearest land.

Not a man stirred to obey the order, but several of them fell on their knees, while one or two cried out with terror.

Already we had begun to feel the heat from that immense flame, and one or two of the men cowered beneath the bulwarks. By the light of the fire I could see the countenances of all. Every face was pale as death.

In that dread moment, one word dispelled all fear, and restored confidence to every heart.

The cabin steward, a long, lank, awkward fellow, from Kennebunk, came up, and having looked a while at the fire, and witnessed the terror in every face, crept up to windward, and said to the first man he reached:

"What are you afraid of, you darned fool? Don't you know that a ship half burned up can't travel so fast to leeward as a whole ship like ours? She hasn't so big a surface for the wind to take hold of."

This was repeated in the ears of all, and then we became sensible, as we gazed on the burning vessel, that she was not approaching us; on the contrary, we were receding from her. Pretty soon the flames began to decrease in volume, until all was darkness again.

The fact was that we saw the fire when it first broke out, and as the blaze became larger and larger, we supposed that the ship was approaching us at every moment, while we were, in fact, receding from her.

When the morning broke upon the sea, and the wind had gone down, no vestige of the wreck was to be found; but there was one whale ship long looked for—many eyes grew weary with watching, and many a heart grew sick with hope deferred, and yet she returned not. Save this doubtful record, her fate has ever remained a mystery to the owners and to those whose relatives probably perished on that awful night.

A SINGULAR GRASS.

There exists in some parts of South Dakota, Colorado, and Texas a singular variety of grass called the "sleepy grass." When in a fresh, green state this plant is strongly charged with narcotic propensities, so much so that horses and cattle grazing it are thrown into profound sleep. It begins to take effect soon after it is eaten, and the sleep continues from twenty-four hours to seven days, according to the quantity consumed. It does not appear to have any toxic effect, for no case of poisoning has been known to arise from it, but it is sufficiently inconvenient to cause much dread among ranchmen, as it is quite impossible to keep animals moving when under its dormoriferous influence.

THE MEXICAN BANDITTI.

By SETH HOLMES.

Way back in the sixties I was on a hunting excursion out in Kansas.

It was at the junction of the Republican and Smoky Hill Forks of the Kansas River that we had erected a small hut of the true backwoods order. We had cut large logs, two feet in diameter, and hewed them square, and notched them at the ends deep enough to let the logs fit close together, thus presenting an impassable barrier to all unwelcome visitors. The roof, some ten feet from the ground, was made by laying these large logs, or some just like them, across and covering them with flat stones taken from the bed of the river. Small, funnel-shaped holes had been cut so as to form places through which to look out; these holes had been so shaped as to leave the small end of the hole on the inside, so that a rifle could be thrust through and moved up or down, to one side or the other, suiting the position occupied by an enemy.

By "we," I mean myself and half a dozen others, who had left home and friends and gone on a hunting trip, which we designed to end in two years. We had been but six months in our present location, which we termed the "Hunter's Cabin." We were all young, hot-headed youths of from twenty to twenty-five years of age—none over twenty-five.

One evening we had just finished supper, and were sit-

ting around the fire, talking merrily over the past and speculating on the future, when some one proposed that each should tell a story of love, adventure, or anything to pass away the time.

It was raining outside, and everything seemed to be just suited to story-telling. There were seven of us, counting myself, and as every fellow was in the right humor we cast lots for who should begin by telling the first. It fell upon Press Newton, the dare-devil of the "squad," who always led all parties that went on wild adventures among the Indians, who lived just across the river.

Press threw away a bone which he had been gnawing, wiped the grease off his mouth, lighted his pipe, and, with a preparatory ahem, began.

Permit me to say, parenthetically, that Press Newton was not one of our party when we left the States, but had joined us shortly after we left the border.

"Well, boys, I suppose as it has fallen to my lot to tell the first, I'll have to go in. You can rely on what I am going to tell you as being strictly true. I was away down in Mexico last summer, and while there I came pretty near being rubbed out. I was staying with a friend of mine a few miles out of Monterey.

"You see, sometimes I would stay in town and be late coming home; sometimes it would be after dark when I left the city on my horse to go through the intervening hills. It was about ten miles from Monterey home.

"Well, one night I had been on what we here term a 'bust,' or 'spree,' and it was near midnight before I got started. Some of my old associates had been with me, and I could hardly get rid of them. But at last I did so, and bade my 'smiling' friends adieu.

"At that time there were a good many thieves and outlaws around the largest places, and if a fellow should be caught out among the hills by himself by any of them chaps, it would be apt to go pretty hard with him. I wasn't afraid, you all know that, but then you see it would do no harm to be prepared for whatever might come—at least, that is my way of thinking.

"Young fellows like myself always went armed down there; in fact, it seemed to be a fashion among the Mexicans to carry enough firearms, daggers, and such like things, to arm a brigade of Americans; and, of course, I wanted to be in the fashion, so I was armed to 'my teeth,' and they were sharp enough to bite the head off a ten-penny nail. I carried two army-size revolvers of the best finish; and—well, they would kill at fifty yards as easy as 'falling off a log.'

"The moon was low in the west as I rode leisurely along the road. I knew there was no danger to be looked for before passing over the first five miles; for quite frequently I would meet persons in carts and on mules; but, strange enough, I always met them—no one passed me, nor did I overtake any one.

"I guess I had gone over about seven miles of the route, when I stopped to let my horse rest and take a drink from a stream which ran across the road. After he had drunk enough I tied him to a tree, and took a stroll down the bank of the stream. It was such a beautiful night, and somehow I felt mighty romantic. Walking on I followed the course of the stream into a deep, dark wood, about two hundred yards away from the road where I had left my horse.

"I went two or three yards into this, and sat down on a fallen tree, and began to speculate over the past and calculate for the future. In fact, I got lost in thought, and sat there until the moon had almost gone down. I was about to start up and go to my horse, when I heard a crackling in the timber behind me. I thought I would stop and see what was the matter. I did not have to wait very long, for presently two men came tumbling through the wood and passed within twenty feet of me.

"As soon as they got to the edge of the woods they stopped and began to talk about some horse. As soon as I heard the word horse spoken, I thought of mine; I listened, and heard the following confab in Spanish:

"'I wonder whose horse that is?'

"'So do I.'

"'I believe I know.'

"'Well, then, who is it that owns him?'

"'I don't know for certain, but I think he is an American.'

"'Ah! I saw a crowd of them in the city yesterday—which one of them?'

"'I think he is a young fellow, about your size.'

"'I wonder where he is.'

"'Somewhere near his horse, I guess.'

"'Well, we must take the horse, and risk getting something for him, or wait and get what the owner has, too.'

"'If we only knew where the owner was, we might get him; we could easily slit his windpipe, and take what money he had, and then sell the horse, too. Don't you see?'

"'Yes; but how?'

"'Waal, if he is the chap I'm thinking of, he is going from the city, and I think he's the same chap; we can leave the horse where he is, and go along the road a mile or two ahead and wait for him. You can get on one side of the road and I on the other; and while I draw his attention by telling him to stop, you can shoot him just as easily as you please. Don't you see?'

"'I think I do. But where will we stop? for we might as well fix everything now as to have to do it after a while, when we may not have time.'

"'About a mile from here the road takes a short turn to the right; the bluffs overhang the road; there it is as dark as a son of Africa. No danger to you, for I will be the only one exposed. Don't you see?'

"'Yes, I see; but suppose he should be somewhere near, and hear all our plans—he would not go to the place you mention.'

"'He is not near, or he would come out and kill you, for the Americans are devils to fight. He would not kill me, for an American loves to have somebody brave enough to meet him. You are brave. I plan, you execute. Don't you see?'

"'Yes, but there is no use staying here any longer, for the fellow might go and mount his horse, and leave before we could get hold of him.'

"'That's the kind of talk I like to hear; it makes a man have confidence in himself to have so trusty a companion with him. Don't you see?'

"And so they moved away, conversing as they went. The cowardly devils—for it was evident that they were both cowards—but they never had any use for courage after that night—they never saw the sunlight again—for—— But I won't anticipate.

"As soon as the sound of their footsteps had died away, I left the woods, and, ascending a knoll, a short distance to the right, examined my firearms in the pale moon-

light, for the moon was just about setting. I found everything right; I went for my horse, and, finding him, I mounted and started on my perilous journey.

"I did not want to betray my knowledge of this murderous plot to the wretches. I spurred up my horse and went at a gallop until I got to about where I thought I would find them. I knew it would be to my advantage to let my horse go at a walk by the place. I knew if I went by at a run they could shoot me in the back. I knew they would try it, too, if I did anything of the sort. If I let my horse go at a walk, I would stand a chance of shooting one of them, and perhaps both. If I shot and disabled, or killed, one, I was pretty sure of the other, for I intended to dismount and 'go in on my muscle.'

"I thought that in a fair fight I was equal to at least two Mexicans.

"I had gone pretty near through the hills, and was congratulating myself on having passed the danger, when I came to a place where the rocks jutted out over the road.

"That was the place!

"I knew it, yet I went forward. Somehow that night I didn't care whether I got into a fight or not; I would just as soon have fought a single Mexican as eaten a breakfast.

"I was just going under the rocks, when some one called out:

"'Halt!'

"I paid no attention to this command, but turned to the opposite side of the road, for I knew that all the danger was to come from that side. I saw a man advance through the gloom and raise a gun to an aim at my head; but ere he had pulled the trigger he was a dead man, for I was just a little too quick for him; just enough too quick to save my life and kill him; for I did kill him.

"I did not stop to take observations, but turned to see what the other yellow devil was at. I didn't turn a minute—no, not a second—too soon, but just soon enough to dodge a bullet. One slightly raked the hair off my head.

"My horse was well trained, so I leaped off his back, and went into the greaser's meat quicker than you could say Jack Robinson backward. He saw that there was no sure escape by running, and thought, perhaps, that he could whip me in a fight; so he drew a knife, and we went in to win, or get rubbed out in the operation.

"It is said that cowards, when cornered, will whip the bravest men sometimes. It was evident that this fellow naturally was a coward, or he would not have wanted help to rob one man, which was shown in his part of the conversation I had overheard; and he now fought with such wild desperation as I never before witnessed. He did not seem to have any particular object to attain, but struck out right and left, up and down, and in fact in every conceivable direction. Directly, seeing a chance, he broke away, and ran for dear life down the road.

"I dropped my knife and caught up my revolver, which I had dropped when I dismounted, and took a hasty aim and fired. He reeled, staggered, and, I thought, was about to fall! but, no, he gathered himself up, and in a few seconds disappeared from my sight.

"As well as I could by feeling I recharged my revolver—that is, filled the two empty barrels, and capped them. I then got my knife and put it in its scabbard; I then mounted and rode slowly forward. I went about half a mile before I heard or saw anything to arouse my suspicions; and the first thing then was a bullet which hissed by my head, followed instantly by the report of a gun; and at the same time I caught a glimpse of a man as he jumped up from behind a bush and ran.

"I spurred my horse and soon overtook him. A sharp crack of my revolver, a death cry, and I was freed from my two enemies. Two killed in one night.

"I left that part of the country, and haven't been there since."

A REMARKABLE CLOCK.

Japan possesses a remarkable timepiece. It is contained in a frame three feet wide and five feet long, representing a noonday landscape of great beauty. In the foreground plum and cherry trees and rich plants appear in full bloom; in the rear is seen a hill, gradual in ascent, from which apparently flows a cascade, admirably imitated in crystal. From this point a threadlike stream meanders, encircling rocks and islands in its windings, and finally losing itself in a far-off stretch of woodland. In a miniature sky a golden sun turns on a silver wire, striking the hours on silver gongs as it passes. Each hour is marked on the frame by a creeping tortoise, which serves the place of a hand. A bird of exquisite plumage warbles at the close of each hour, and as the song ceases a mouse sallies forth from a neighboring grotto, and, scampering over the hill to the garden, is soon lost to view.

A FLOWER WHOSE PERFUME IS FATAL.

The flowers of the Rali-Mujah, or death plant of Java, emit a fatal perfume. The plant is found only in the volcanic districts of Java and Sumatra. Its flowers are large, milk-white, and cuplike, being about the size and depth of a large coffee cup, and having the rim guarded by fine thorns. These blossoms, beautiful as they are, distil a deadly perfume, so powerful as to overcome, if inhaled for any length of time, a full-grown man, and killing all forms of insect life within several feet of them. The perfume, though more pungent, is as sickeningly sweet as chloroform, which it great resembles in effect, producing insensibility, but convulsing, at the same time, the muscles of the face, especially those about the mouth and eyes, drawing the former up into a grin. An inhalation is followed by violent headache and a ringing in the ears, which gives way to a temporary deafness, often total while it lasts. All insects and birds seem to avoid contact with the death plant, but when accidentally approaching it have been observed to drop to the earth, even when as far from it as three feet, and unless at once removed they soon die, evincing the same symptoms as when etherized.

ORIGIN OF THE PHRASE, "HE'S A BRICK."

The phrase is derived from an expression of Aristotle, which, translated from Greek in English, signifies "a four-cornered man," a brick having four corners. By a man, or action being "square," we mean "honest." Aristotle's expression may be rather equivalent to an "all-round" man. An ambassador once upon a time expressed to the King of Sparta his wonder that none of the Spartan cities had walls of defense. The king took him to where his little army was drawn up for inspection, and, pointing to them, said: "These are the walls of Sparta, ten thousand men, and every man a 'brick.'"

THE NEWS OF ALL NATIONS.

Travel 2,000 Miles in Boat.

After traveling 2,000 miles of a trip planned to cover 7,000 miles in a thirty-foot motor boat, George C. Hensler, accompanied by his brothers, Thomas E. and John E. Hensler, all of Great Falls, Mont., arrived recently at Kansas City.

The brothers had made the journey in the Missouri River from Fort Benton, Mont. Their destination is Florida, which they expect to reach by the way of Missouri and Mississippi Rivers and the Gulf of Mexico. They have been on the way a year and a month.

Bets on Death and Wins.

As proof that he had sporting blood in his veins, Clem Beachy, trainer of light harness horses, who died recently, laid a wager early in the spring with a physician that he would live three months, and he won.

The physician had declared he did not think Beachy could live three weeks, as he was suffering from liver trouble. Beachy is said to have bet $250 or $300. After winning, he wanted another bet that he would live four months longer. He would have lost this bet.

Flyer Loops Loop 3,000 Feet in Air.

French Aviator Pegoud, who recently made a parachute drop from an aëroplane from a height of 900 feet, accomplished a much more remarkable feat recently which at first sight appears to have been a piece of extraordinary aërial acrobatics, but which experts declare was an epoch-making experiment toward the attainment of safety in the air.

Briefly, Pegoud caused his monoplane to describe a gigantic letter S in the sky, during which he was flying upside down for about a quarter of a mile.

Secrecy was maintained prior to the test, and only a few persons were present when Pegoud took the air. He mounted rapidly to a height of more than 3,000 feet, describing a curve; then the forward part of the machine was observed to incline toward the earth.

Through glasses the spectators saw the propeller slacken and the monoplane further incline until it was perpendicular with the earth. It seemed as if nothing could stop the headlong plunge.

As the machine dropped swiftly the tail dipped again toward the earth and the pilot appeared head downward. Seconds, which seemed hours, passed. With an almost imperceptible curve the machine shifted its course to a straight line, the pilot in the same position. How long he remained upside down the anxious watchers could not determine, but it was long enough to cause them to believe that he could never right himself.

Presently the monoplane dipped again, and, with a graceful curve, assumed an erect position. Pegoud flew for a few minutes to and fro and descended by a series of beautiful spirals.

"Everything went splendidly," the aviator said, on landing. "The levers answered the slightest touch. I remained for a long time head downward because I wanted to, not because I couldn't help it. The sensation is strange but not unpleasant, and the machine did not pitch at all.

"I went slowly so as to avoid subjecting the machine to too violent strain, but had I wanted to I could have righted myself much more quickly."

Ball Leaves Print on Him.

Pitcher "Lefty" Smith, of the Pittsfield, Mass., team, after winning one game from the Hartford club, held Hartford to a tie in the second contest of the double header. In the first inning of the second game, a Hartford slugger hit a hot liner directly into the pitcher's box. Smith could not dodge it, but he managed to turn his back to it. The ball hit him on the shoulder and glanced off into the infield. That night when Smith was changing his clothes he discovered that the ball which had hit him, a new one, had left a distinct mark, seven stitches in a half circle, and the signature of the league president neatly printed on his skin.

"Germ" Monkeys Make Escape.

Three germ monkeys escaped from their cage in the laboratory of the San Francisco city board of health, and for half an hour they gave a first-rate imitation of a bull in a china shop. Bottles and retorts were swept from shelves along which the Simians gayly skipped, and dignified doctors in white robes hurdled over the wreckage in pursuit.

Germs of smallpox, scarlet fever, diphtheria, and rabies had been fed to the monkeys to ascertain their effect and they seemed to thrive on the diet. Infantile paralysis germs, however, made them sleepy and they curled for a nap. When they awoke they found their cage door unfastened. They eventually were cornered after each had stolen a drink out of a bottle labeled "hookworms," which put them to sleep.

Christened "in the Jordan."

Water taken from the River Jordan twelve years ago by his maternal grandmother, Mrs. Richard Bew, was used in St. James' Protestant Episcopal Church, at Atlantic City, for the christening of Joseph Bew Bartlett. He is the son of Robert Bartlett. Three grandmothers and a great-great uncle were among those who witnessed the ceremony.

Pomeroy in Jail Thirty-seven Years.

Thirty-seven years ago, one day last month, Jesse Pomeroy, considered by criminologists one of the most interesting prisoners in the country, was committed to the Massachusetts State prison at Concord, after Governor Claflin and council had commuted the death sentence and decreed that he should spend the rest of his life at State prison in solitary confinement.

When eighteen years old Pomeroy was taken to Concord on September 7, 1876, and since then he has been but once outside of prison walls. That was for a few hours one day in 1884, when, with the other prisoners, he was transferred to Charlestown. The trip was made by special train, and the prisoners were shackled together and closely guarded.

For the past few years Pomeroy has been confined in

a specially constructed cell on the ground floor of the "Cherry Hill" section of the prison, which is occupied by long-term men. In point of confinement he is the senior prisoner. Although he has made many attempts to escape, he only once succeeded in getting out of his cell. That was one night last winter, when he was captured by a guard in the corridor of "Cherry Hill."

With a powerful drill, which has not been found, he cut two of the lower bars of his cell. Thirty-seven years of prison existence has not served to change Pomeroy's character. He was morose when first locked in a cell at Concord, and he has so remained up to the present time.

Replace a "Haunted" School.

Children of Warrenville, Ill., will have a new school building this year to replace the "haunted school" they have refused to attend since the winter of 1912. The haunted school was made a place of horror to the children by the killing there before her class of Miss Edith Smith by Sylvester Adams, January 10, 1912.

Six-year-old Boy to Prison.

Richard Tuviovsky, six years old, has been committed to the State Industrial School for Boys, at Racine, Wis., there to remain until he has attained the age of twenty-one.

Richard has caused the police more trouble than any ten grown-ups, his crimes ranging from plain burglary to highway robbery, in which he used an unloaded revolver. Twenty times has Richard's name been entered on the police blotter for crimes that would have immediately placed older boys behind prison bars.

Indians Can't Dance, for Water is Scarce.

Scarcity of water has compelled the Ponca Indians to cut out their sun dance at White Eagle, Okla., this year. The dance calls for such exhaustive gymnastics that water must be plentiful to revive the participants when their gyrations render them unconscious.

Wealthy as they are, the Poncas do not believe they can afford to buy water for the purpose, and the rivers in the vicinity are all dry. The sun dance of the Poncas is as famous as the snake dance of the Mohaves, and much more tiring. Three days the Ponca bucks perform worshiping the sun after the Indian fashion.

Self-inflicted wounds, dancing in hot coats, and similar tortures are prescribed, and if the buck comes through whole he is worthy of being a representative of the tribe in any conference or marriage ceremony.

Lone Cannibal Dead

Flags on Washington Island, if there be any flags there, are lowered in mourning. The cannibal lady is dead. Such is the news R. M. Fitts, manager of the island, recently received in Honolulu. The lovely lady, who came over from the Solomons one sad day years ago and made her home on a sand hill, is no more. She probably starved to death. Few missionaries have been there lately. Details are lacking.

Those who have seen the cannibal lady sitting on a sand hill, grinning and looking innocent, ever waiting to stick somebody for the meals, will probably be surprised to hear of her death, and probably regret that the lady's patience met with such an ill reward. For years she sat on the little sand hill, waiting for a friendly sail to bring her something really worth while in the way of a repast. All in vain. It is almost certain that she died of starvation.

Her life while on Washington was impeccable. No love affairs rent her heart or killed her appetite there. She lived quietly and hopefully. What her past might have been, what brought her from the Solomons, is not known—she was not a talkative sort of a lady. The secrets of her past she has taken with her to the grave, but her life on Washington Island is an open book. She lived there as best she could, making shift with odd sorts of meals. To this extent she was like Socrates. She knew she was ignorant. But she differed from him in that she didn't give a darn.

It was probably a love affair which drove the gracious lady from the Solomons to Washington Island. Such things have driven persons from one hemisphere to another; from sanity to insanity, more times than it is pleasant to tell. She might have fallen in love with King Eatem Up, and later decided that he was not worthy of her affection, so, dropping him a curtsy in the hot sands, she passed the whole affair and skipped off to Washington. For a number of years she has lived there; the exact number is not known. But it was probably long enough to make any one in her position glad to do a croak—especially when one has a particular and peculiar appetite.

Courtesy Wins a Fortune.

The will of Mrs. Jane Elizabeth Granniss, of New York, contains a sermon. It preaches the reward of courtesy, politeness, and attention to duty. William J. Murphy, who was Mrs. Granniss' secretary, had all these qualities, according to the will, and she showed her appreciation by leaving him $30,000 outright and one-third of her estate.

Mrs. Granniss was the widow of James Elnathan Granniss, who was president of the Tradesman's National Bank. She made several other bequests to friends and several to public institutions, but Murphy was the largest individual beneficiary.

Risking Life on Long Trip in Little Boat.

A small power boat flying a signal of distress was noticed a mile and a half off the beach at Manchester, Mass., by A. U. McCormick, who, with the assistance of three others, launched the lifeboat and went out to her aid.

On reaching her, they found the lone navigator, a man about thirty-five, asleep in the bottom of the boat considerably exhausted from his hard experience at sea. The man proved to be Captain Mathias Johnson, who sailed from Eastport, Maine, August 3, bound for San Francisco via the Panama Canal, in the open gig whaleboat *George Washington*, which is about twenty-five feet long and affords the lone navigator absolutely no protection from the elements.

The trouble proved to be run-out batteries. On being furnished new ones, he got under way for Marblehead.

Gored by Steer, He Wins Girl.

Pity is akin to love, is the adage which again was proved by the marriage of Art Acord, champion "bulldogger" of the world, and one of the best broncho riders in the West. He wedded Miss Edythe Kessinger, motion-picture actress, known on the film as Edythe Sterling. The ceremony was the result of a romance which began in California, where the two were filling an engagement with a film company.

The "movie" associations of the couple developed a warm love affair, but the little actress persistently whispered "No," when Acord refused to give up his hazardous occupation. Then Acord came to Salt Lake to become a contestant in the recent "stampede," where he was gored by a maddened steer.

Only when Miss Kessinger saw her admirer at the hospital would she recede from her former stand. She was constantly at his bedside while he was disabled. After Acord had been removed to the hotel and before he had fully recovered the actress consented to become his wife.

Man Loses Money, Walks Far.

Having lost practically every dollar he possessed through a business failure in Byron, Minn., Henry McFetrich, aged fifty-one, is walking to West Pittston, Pa., where relatives live. McFetrich reach Sharon, Pa., with just $1.05 in his pocket. He walked the entire distance from Minneapolis, about 900 miles.

Curling Iron Her Weapon.

Getting the drop on a daylight burglar who entered her home at Kansas City, Kan., Mrs. J. M. Sheridan forced the intruder out of the house at the point of a nickel-plated hair curler.

Mrs. Sheridan heard the front door slam and then her pet dog began to growl. She seized the hair curler, and, crooking it between her thumb and fore finger, revolver-like, went to the first door. The burglar had his revolver drawn, and was endeavoring to circle around the small dog.

"Get out of here!" she commanded, pointing the hair curler at the burglar's head.

"Don't shoot!" he pleaded. Then he backed out of the door and fled.

Prodigal Goes Many Miles.

Johnny Distefano, of Greenleaf, Kan., modern prodigal, is home after having traveled more than 8,000 miles alone. Johnny is twelve years old.

Almost two years ago the boy, a son of James Distefano, Missouri Pacific machinist, left home mysteriously. His parents did not know where he was until about two weeks later, when his uncle cabled he had arrived in Castelvetrano, Sicily, the old home of the Distefano family.

Johnny's father received a letter a few months ago saying he wished to come back to the United States. The parents sent $35 to the boy, and received word that he had started back.

Again the boy disappeared, and his parents feared he was lost. Recently he arrived in Philadelphia, Pa., after having taken nearly two months in crossing the ocean. He had visited dozens of seaports, had been put off several ships, and finally rode across as a stowaway.

With "Witch Stick" He Finds Water in Yard.

After five years of unsuccessful effort to persuade the city to extend water mains to his neighborhood, Harry Snedecker resorted to the "witch stick," and found a rushing stream of clear, cold water in his back yard.

A few days ago Snedecker cut a forked twig from a peach tree. At the spot toward which the fork flopped, as he held it in his hand, he ordered well diggers to begin operations. When a thin stratum of rock was blasted away at a depth of twenty-five feet, a stream five feet deep and two feet wide was uncovered. The stream is said to be sufficient to supply thousands of homes.

Harvard Should Rule the Gridiron.

John Harvard's sons are feeling pretty joyous now, and with perfect right. Not only have they wound up their season of athletics in all branches with four intercollegiate championships and two sectional titles to their credit, but every prospect is bright for the success of the Crimson in the coming college year. There are enough athletes of tried, seasoned ability returning to the university in the fall to make sure a healthy nucleus for teams in all sports.

Of the football team which humbled Yale to the tune of 20 to 0 last November and made a season's total of 176 points to their opponents' 26, nine men are due to return.

With a veteran line, the Crimson should be able to give cards and spades to any other college team in the country and still top the pile, more especially because of a reserve of twelve men from last year's first-team squad and the material to be gained from the freshman organization. The veterans fill every position in the line with the exception of one end, and in the back field the only vacancy is at quarter back. That, by the way, offers the hardest problem, but it is probable that the position will be given at first to Mahan, who was captain and half back of the freshmen. He was tried out as quarter in spring practice, and showed ability, but he will find rivals in Watson, the freshman quarter, and in Freeley and Logan, two of the varsity subs, who aspire to the directorship.

The line-up for the rest of the team, as far as can be forecasted, shows Captain R. T. P. Storer and H. R. Hitchcock, junior, at tackles; Pennock and Trumbull, as guards, and Wiggleworth in his old place as center. O'Brien, who won his "H" last fall, is sure for one of the ends, and possibly Gardiner, who was unable to play last year because of an injury, will go in on the other flank. The back field is fully as strong, comprising, as it does, Bradlee, Brickley, and Hardwick. The last named must take Felton's place as the punter, and, though he lacks something of his predecessor's certainty of placement, he averages well on distance. Brickley will, of course, attend to the drop kicking.

A Strange Tale of Adventure.

Melvin A. Hollinshead, of Port Clinton, Ohio, an instructor at the University of Illinois, has returned from his vacation, spent on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea, with the tale of a strange adventure. It happened near a little Italian town. Hollinshead had been on a long walk in the mountain region and stopped at an inn for lunch.

Seated at a table in a dark corner of the room were three men with a bottle of wine before them. They were swarthy, evil-looking fellows, with bandannas around their brows. They watched Hollinshead closely, and saw he spent all of twenty cents, a large amount in such an inn. They followed him, and a short distance from the inn they seized him from behind, shoving a sack over his head. The prisoner was dragged down the mountain slope and taken to a cave. There he learned he was in the hands of brigands.

At the entrance to the cave they stood him up and called

to their chief. The chief had a fiercer mustache than any of the rest, and swore more grandly. He ran toward the prisoner. Their eyes met. The chief stepped back, with an ejaculation in English. The recognition was mutual.

"Toney!" cried the professor.

"Mister Hollinshead!" cried the chief. And he unbound his arms and embraced him, while the band removed their hats and looked on in wonder.

But it was all so simple. Toney had been the bootblack at the university. With the dimes saved from shines he had returned to his native mountains and here he was, a full-fledged brigand chief. Maybe the instructor was not glad! They drank all the wine in the cave and Hollinshead sent to the inn for more.

"Such a weird, uncanny, and altogether delightful night!" said the instructor. "I have never spent. Toney was as glad to see me as I was to see him at that critical moment. He insisted upon escorting me back to the inn and sent his regards to all the boys."

Schoolboys Hear from President.

A message from President Wilson to 9,000,000 schoolboys in the United States, who take up their fall studies, has been given out at the White House.

"My warmest greetings to the boys on their return to school," wrote the president. "May the year bring them every good thing, and strengthen them in all the ideals of their service.

"It is a pleasure to me to be their chief, because I know that good citizens without number will come from their ranks to counsel and serve the country we love."

Jennings Sad.

Here we have one of the saddest men in baseball. Hughie Jennings and his Detroit Tigers were once a power in the American League, but this season they landed in sixth place, in close company with the unlucky St. Louis Browns and the helpless New York Yankees. There is a big difference between the class of the Tigers in 1907, 1908, and 1909, and the present crew. Jennings has Ty Cobb, and that is about all. Cobb can't win games by himself, even if he is the best ball player there is.

Jennings has always been famous for his coaching ability and his "Eee-Yah!" yell, but he has no opportunity to coach or yell now.

Smokes and Matches.

According to the annual statement of the United States bureau of internal revenue, 14,276,000,000 cigarettes and 7,699,000,000 cigars were consumed in the United States last year. It is also estimated, informally, that the lighting of them involved the borrowing of 21,975,082,327 matches.

A Police Dog Champion.

"Pasha," a German shepherd dog, owned by Benjamin H. Throop, of Scranton, Pa., proved the best jumper among all the police dogs recently exhibited at New York.

One of the dog's trainers went out on the field and was supposed to have been knocked senseless by a brick hurled by another attendant. He really was not hurt, but Pasha was led to believe he had been attacked, and was sent on the trail. Taking up the scent from the brick, which he discovered, the dog was soon off after the "fugitive," and caught him. It was fortunate that he was well padded, for Pasha is a powerful dog, and was anything but gentle with him. A nine-foot fence which the dog leaped while on the trail was the highest obstacle placed in the way of the dogs, and Pasha alone succeeded in clearing it. Considering that fully 10,000 persons were present and that they crossed and recrossed the trails left by the supposed culprits, the dogs performed remarkable feats.

Dehorned Bull Kills Man.

Christian Smeltzley, 45 years old, was killed by a bull which he was leading to water. The animal had been dehorned, but it charged Smeltzley and trampled him. Smeltzley struggled for half an hour with the bull, but finally became exhausted. The bull crushed the man's skull and mangled his body.

River Goes Dry; Farmers to Sue.

The big Platte River which at this time of the year usually is running bank full of water from the melting snows in the Rocky Mountains, is as dry as a bone for 100 miles up and downstream from Kearney. One thousand farmers of the Platte River Valley have retained counsel to file claims against the government.

It is alleged that the government has taken all the water from the river and has turned it into the Pathfinder Irrigation district in eastern Wyoming and western Nebraska.

Biggest Hog Has Dog Chum.

W. W. Oliver is the owner of the largest hog in Missouri. It is of the Poland-China breed and weighs 700 pounds. It is 7 feet 5 inches long and 3 feet 4 inches high. The smallest part of its leg is eleven inches in circumference.

The hog is very gentle. Its closest friend is a tiny dog, which goes to the hog lot every day, leaps upon the back of the big hog, and rides around the lot. Both have been entered in the freak-class exhibit of the next county fair.

Yale Crew Coach Problem Put off.

No action will be taken this fall relative to choosing coaches and establishing a coaching policy for the Yale crews next year. Captain Charley Snowden has decided to let the matter drop for the time being and has gone to Europe. It was planned directly after the boat race at New London to hold a conference at the Yale Club in New York. No conference will be held now until Snowden returns, for under the Yale system the captain has full power in the appointment of a coach.

Lightning Spoils His Hat, but He Escapes.

Dink Looney, of Mountain Home, Ark., has been compelled to buy a new hat, but he is not complaining. He is glad he is alive.

During a rain storm Looney went to the barn to feed his horse, and his father, alarmed because he did not return, found him unconscious. After feeding the horse, Looney sat down in the door of the corn crib to watch the storm, and was struck by a bolt of lightning. His hat was torn to shreds, his hair was singed, and a place on his head about an inch in diameter was shaved as completely as if a barber had done the job.

Sell 10,000 Kisses to Help Hospital Fund.

Twenty thousand masculine lips pressed those of six fair members of well-to-do families in a unique scheme whereby $10,000 was raised toward a fund to endow the

Salem, Ohio, Hospital through the dispensing of women's kisses at one dollar each. Men, young and old, stood in line to enjoy the osculatory performance.

All the women were single. One married woman, seeking to do her part, compromised by shaking hands with all comers at twenty-five cents a shake. One of the victims, her husband, she charged two dollars for the privilege of publicly closing his fingers over hers.

Save Man's Life; Now to Hang Him.

Surgeons were hurriedly called to the Shenandoah County jail, where they performed an operation on John Sushanluski, who is sentenced to hang for the murder of a rival whom he killed in a fit of jealous rage. Had they not operated upon the murderer, he would have died within a few hours, but the surgeons now say that he will live to be executed according to the sentence of the court.

"Murder!" Cries Parrot.

Two policemen were startled at the Delancey Street station, Philadelphia, when they heard shrieks of "Murder!" They rushed across the street, and there found Joseph Kaluk, aged 24, with his abdomen slit. Two men were leaping over the rear fence.

Standing on a chair near Kaluk was an old green parrot. Its wing had been broken in the fight.

The police caught Alexander Kundre and Joseph Betinsky, and they were brought back to the house where Kaluk lay unconscious. The moment the parrot saw the two men it broke into shrill cries of "Murder!"

On the evidence of the bird alone the prisoners were locked up to await the result of Kaluk's injuries.

Hear Meteor Crash Twenty Miles Away.

With a crash that was heard twenty miles away, a great meteor fell into the Seaconnet River, near Tiverton, R. I. Great volumes of steam arose as it churned up the water.

The meteor fell during an electrical storm. In the immediate vicinity windows were broken and crockery shaken from shelves, while at Island Park, nearly two miles away, a merry-go-round was jarred into motion.

Persons who saw the fiery body as it hissed through the sky assert that it was of unusual size, and traveling so rapidly as to appear at a short distance almost like a flash of lightning.

The river is of considerable depth where the meteor fell and no effort to locate the mass was made.

Sleeps on Tar, Can't Get Up.

While he was wandering in the darkness near the water front, at Vancouver, Wash., Frank Scott chose a barrel to sleep on. When he awoke an unseen force held him in his resting place. He was unable to move. Scott cried loudly for help, and it was not until three policemen cut him loose that he found he had been sleeping on a tar barrel.

Edison Looks Into Future.

Thomas A. Edison, the famous inventor, was asked recently what in his opinion would be the next improvement in automobiling. He replied: "Cement roads. I believe that in ten years cement roads will band the country from one end to the other to the exclusion of all other kinds."

Mr. Edison does not believe there is need of a substitute for rubber for tires. He said: "Rubber trees are being planted in the tropical countries. A vast amount of capital is going into rubber-tree farms. Eventually there will be a great influx of rubber harvested from them. I am told by manufacturers of automobiles that rubber should be cheaper to-day than a year ago. They expect rubber to go down."

Asked what improvements could be expected in newspaper making in the next decade, he replied: "Something to save paper. If noncarbonized inks were used—inks that would bleach—papers could be run through the presses again by the aid of an invention or two and be used several times. It's bound to come to a proposition of this kind. Inks that will bleach will be used."

Pussy Catches Mouse, But Mav Cost $10,000.

A pussy cat that wished to keep up its reputation as a good mouser is held responsible for a $10,000 damage suit filed in the supreme court of New York by Edmund J. Hill, a clerk, against the owners of a lunch room.

According to Hill, he was partaking of a noonday meal in the lunch room when a marble slab standing beside the table at which he was eating fell and crushed his right leg. Investigation revealed that the cat in chasing a mouse across the slab upset it.

Pussy caught the mouse all right.

The lunch company, in an answer to the suit, disclaims all responsibility.

To Cut 50 Cents a Week Diet.

Miss Clara Loewus, of Towanda, Pa., who lived for twenty weeks on $10 last spring while a student in the Ithaca Conservatory of Music, has sent word to the faculty that she will be back there this fall and proposes to continue her meager diet.

She says that she will try to cut the 50 cents a week diet by a few cents. Local tradesmen are praying that Miss Loewus does not start a campaign against the cost of living among other students this fall.

Lawson, Cyclist, Killed.

Gus Lawson, an American cyclist, and Scheuermann, a German rider, are dead, and Meinhold, the German racer's pacemaker, is dying as the result of an accident in the hundred kilometer, motor-paced bicycle championship race at Cologne, Germany.

While Lawson was pacing Guignard, a Frenchman, a tire of Lawson's motor cycle burst, and the racers were hurled to the bottom of the track. Lawson's skull and both arms were fractured, and he was injured internally.

Lawson came here from Los Angeles, and was considered in cycling circles the best pacemaker in the world. He was a brother of the noted cyclist, Iver Lawson, of Salt Lake City.

Boy a Good Investment.

A professor of the Chicago University has been indulging in figures relating to the cost of rearing a boy, says *Life*. He declares that no matter how poor a boy's parents may be, it costs $4,000 to bring him from babyhood to the age of 18. This is the minimum for any boy. And you can spend as much more than this as you please.

The professor, perhaps unconsciously, conveys the impression that even if you spend as little as $4,000 you may not get your money's worth.

But in our humble opinion, if it should happen to cost $1,000,000 to rear a boy it is well worth it. Not that we

would encourage the expenditure of $1,000,000 on any boy. But is there any other investment which pays such big returns?

It is true, of course, that you are always taking a gambling chance with any boy. He may go wrong in spite of everything you can do, and yet, looking at the matter in its very worse aspects, there is so much that you gain in large, human experience, in varieties of emotions, in expansion and contraction of the soul, the mind and the heart in rearing a boy that it pays under any conditions.

When you put thorough affection and interest and encouragement and as much chastisement as may be necessary, and hope and faith and charity into a boy, it is better than planting a garden, better than speculating in Wall Street, better than falling in love with a woman, better than anything else in the world that we know anything about.

A boy is a much more human document than any other kind of a human being. There is more genuine response in a small boy than there is in a Wagner orchestra of a medium-sized ocean. There is everything in a small boy that there ought to be, and a great deal more. Besides, a small boy can cause more trouble to the square inch than anything else on earth.

And that is the reason, professor, why it pays to raise one, no matter how much he costs.

Pipe Burns While He Sleeps.

Abram Kercher, a farmer, started on a drive through Elkhart County, Ind. He fell asleep in his buggy as he was smoking a pipe. When he awoke the vehicle was ablaze, the horse was running away, and his clothing was on fire. Kercher was severely burned and is in a serious condition.

TOBACCO HABIT You can conquer it easily in 5 days, improve your health, prolong your life. No more stomach trouble, no foul breath, no heart weakness. Regain manly vigor, calm nerves, clear eyes & superior mental strength. Whether you chew, or smoke pipe, cigarettes, cigars, get my interesting Tobacco Book. Worth its weight in gold. Mailed free. E. J. WOODS, 534 Sixth Av. 230 C, New York, N.Y.

50,000 Boys Made Happy

A Marvelous Fun and Money-making MOVING PICTURE MACHINE

Description of This New Model Moving Picture Machine

This machine is made of Russian Metal, black enamel, eight-wheel mechanism which drives the moving pictures; excelsior diaphragm lens, triple polished; standard double extra reflector, throwing ray of light many feet, enlarging the picture up to three or four feet in diameter; lamp is fitted with a great safety carbide generator, and produces the highest light power. Has far greater light power than the ordinary electric light, producing 500 candle power on the screen and bringing out every detail of the picture with pronounced distinctness. A child can learn in five minutes how to run this really wonderful machine.

This moving picture Machine which I want to send you FREE, gives clear and life-like moving pictures as are shown at any of the regular moving picture shows. It flashes moving pictures on the sheet before you. This machine and box of films are FREE—absolutely free to every boy in this land who wants to write for an Outfit, free to girls and free to older people. Read MY OFFER below which shows you how to get this marvelous machine.

Made $12.00 in One Night

Received your Moving Picture Machine and am well pleased with it. My chum, Tom Neal, and, I, together, made $12.00 in one night. Every boy in the United States ought to have a Moving Picture Machine in his home. There is no end of fun. T. M. PIERSON, Jr., Welona, Ala.

It Is a Beauty

Dear Sir:—I take pleasure in telling you I have received my machine. It is a beauty. English language is too weak to describe it. It is a beauty and is well worth the work required by you to do for it. It is a beauty and many thanks for it. —CLARENCE A. WHITTEN, Amherst, Va.

My Wonderful Offer to You HERE IS what you are to do in order to get this amazing moving picture machine and the real moving pictures: Send your name and address—that is all. Write name and address very plainly. Mail to-day. As soon as I receive it I will mail you 20 of the most beautiful premium pictures you ever saw—all brilliant and shimmering colors. There are fourteen different colors in the pictures, all wrought together in the most splendid manner. I want you to distribute these premium pictures on a special 25-cent offer among the people you know. They cannot get these pictures at the art stores at any price. When you have distributed the 20 premium pictures on my liberal offer you will have collected $5.00. Send the $5.00 to me and I will immediately send you FREE the moving picture machine outfit and the box of film, all complete.

PLEASE USE COUPON

50,000 of these machines have made 50,000 boys happy. Answer at once. Be the first in your town to get one.

M. DOONAN, Sec'y, 649 W. 43d St., Dept. 500 New York

A Box of Film Free With Your Machine

Read These Happy Letters

One of the Boys

Dear Sir: I do not suppose you remember me, but I am one of the boys who received a moving picture machine some time ago. I tell you that I am pretty slow at returning my thanks, but I must admit that it is a beauty. I suppose I have had it about six months now, but I have never had a bit of trouble with it. Chas. Lester Bean, Denmark, S. C.

Sold 300 Tickets

I am very thankful for that wonderful Machine and I think it is the best I have ever seen. I am going to have an entertainment today, and therefore I have not much time to write letters. I think I will make about $10.00. I have sold 300 tickets already. Joseph Rauch, 2411 W. Broadway, St. Louis, Mo.

Wouldn't Sell for $25.00

I am slow about sending in my thanks for the Moving Picture Machine, I received about a month ago. It is a beauty. I would not sell it for $25.00 if I could not get another one like it. Leland S. MacRae, 416 Iroquois St., Laurium, Mich.

A Show Every Night

I received your Moving Picture Machine and I think it is worth $50.00. I have a show every night and lots of people come to it; it's a wonder. Fred Rico, 309 Schoomaker Ave., Monessen, Pa.

Made $17.85 One Night

Please send me your film list, as I lost the other one. I made $17.85 in one night with my Moving Picture Machine. One boy offered me $10.00 for my machine. Fred Mull, College Park, Ga.

FREE COUPON

Good for Moving Picture Machine Offer

M. DOONAN, Sec'y 649 West 43d Street Dept. 500 New York

Please send me the 20 Premium Pictures, so that I may earn the Great Moving Picture Machine and Outfit. Yours truly,

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Write Name, Street, City and State on lines above

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We give herewith a list of some of the back numbers in print. You can have your news dealer order them or they will be sent direct by the publishers to any address upon receipt of the price in money or postage stamps.

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654—The Mystery of a Hotel Room.
655—The Tragedy of the Well.
656—The Black Hand.
657—The Black Hand Nemesis.
658—A Masterly Trick.
659—A Dangerous Man.
660—Castor, the Poisoner.
661—The Castor Riddle.
662—A Tragedy of the Bowery.
663—Four Scraps of Paper.
664—The Secret of the Mine.
665—The Dead Man in the Car.
666—Nick Carter's Master Struggle.
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669—Nick Carter's Sudden Peril.
670—The Man With the Missing Thumb.
671—Feltman, the "Fence."
672—A Night with Nick Carter.
673—In the Nick of Time.
674—The Dictator's Treasure.
675—Pieces of Eight.
676—Behind the Mask.
677—The Green Patch.
678—The Drab Thread.
679—The Live-wire Clue.
680—The Vampire's Prey.
681—The Policy King Baffled.
682—The Madman's Gig.
683—A Life at Stake.
684—Trailing a Secret Thread.
685—The Crimson Flash.
686—A Puzzle of Identities.
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688—The Vanishing Heiress.
689—The Birth of a Mystery.
690—A Clue from the Past.
691—The Red Triangle.
692—Doctor Quartz Again.
693—The Famous Case of Doctor Quartz.
694—The Chemical Clue.
695—The Prison Cipher.
696—A Pupil of Doctor Quartz.
697—The Midnight Visitor.
698—The Master Crook's Match.
699—The Man Who Vanished.
700—The Garnet Gauntlet.
701—The Silver Hair Mystery.
702—The Cloak of Guilt.
703—A Battle for a Million.
704—Written in Red.
705—The Collodion Stain.
706—Rogues of the Air.
709—The Bolt from the Blue.
710—The Stockbridge Affair.
711—A Secret from the Past.
712—Playing the Last Hand.
713—A Slick Article.
714—The Taxicab Riddle.
715—The Knife Thrower.
716—The Ghost of Bare-faced Jimmy.
717—The Master Rogue's Alibi.
719—The Dead Letter.
720—The Allerton Millions.
722—The House of Whispers.
723—The Blue Room Mystery.
728—The Mummy's Head.
729—The Statue Clue.
730—The Torn Card.
731—Under Desperation's Spur.
732—The Connecting Link.
733—The Abduction Syndicate.
736—The Toils of a Siren.
737—The Mark of a Circle.
738—A Plot Within a Plot.
739—The Dead Accomplice.
740—A Mysterious Robber.
741—The Green Scarab.
742—The Strangest Case on Record.
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746—The Secret Entrance.
747—The Cavern Mystery.
748—The Disappearing Fortune.
749—A Voice from the Past.
752—The Spider's Web.
753—The Man With a Crutch.
754—The Rajah's Regalia.
755—Saved from Death.
756—The Man Inside.
757—Out for Vengeance.
758—The Poisons of Exili.
759—The Antique Vial.
760—The House of Slumber.
761—A Double Identity.
762—The Mocker's" Stratagem.
763—The Man that Came Back.
764—The Tracks in the Snow.
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